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THE SOUTH WALES COAST

E. R. Thomas.

From a very dear friend.

Dec-25. 1913.

The Saltchouse and Tumulus
Port Dynon, Gower

The South Wales Coast

From Chepstow to Aberystwyth

By Ernest Rhys

Illustrated

New York
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1911

29183

DA
VAE
R.L.

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PREAMBLE

THE long range of coast here described, from the Wye half-way across Cardigan Bay, bordering the land of a hundred castles, offers one of the best holiday regions in all Britain. But the country has far too much individuality to be treated only in the light of another summer and autumn resort—a wilder extent that is being tamed to the lure of the golfer and the motorist. So the following pages have been made transparent wherever the chance came to the real lineaments and Welsh differences of each particular bit of country, and nothing has been held too trivial that serves to start its memory or spirit of place. For the itinerant, recounting his steps, often finds it was a sand-filled railway arch, a tramp or cockle-picker, a broken wall or old salt-house, quite as much as any castle of romance or lion of the guide-books, that knitted up the associations of a scene, and gave it the salient touch.

On a last journey to Caerleon, where I was bound thinking mainly of the Roman city of Legions and Arthur's "Round Table," the decisive incident proved to be the overtaking on the road of an unlucky house-carpenter who had been "fired" from Newport workhouse that morning, and who drove King Arthur clean out of the

picture. On the Welsh roads the realities are for ever overtaking romance in this way, and you have, if you are a sentimental traveller, to be forewarned of them, and to be prepared for the cloud of smoke that hangs in the mining valleys, and for slums on a mountain-side where you expected a castle. Even the great change which is now passing over Gwent and Glamorgan, and which has needlessly ruined by sheer neglect (not of art but of science) the look and finer human ordering of whole regions, has led to the magnificence of the Titanic docks and their ocean-ships, and the beginning of great Welsh seaport and city architecture. You need not care only for the past, or be an archæologue or romancer, to enjoy this land of Merlin and the Tylwyth Teg, and once you have come under its "cyfaredd," as the poets say, you will get to like it better and better every year you return to it.

Before he turns the leaf the writer ought to acknowledge very gratefully the unselfish aid he has had from various people, including his fellow-travellers. In especial his thanks are due to Mr. T. H. Thomas—artist, naturalist, and Welsh "Herald"—for the loan of invaluable original drawings for reproduction, and for the account of the Isle of Birds, Grassholm (the "Gwales in Penvro" of the Mabinogion, never, I believe, before described). Also to "G. R." for her contributions to the chapters on Kenfig, Margam, and St. Davids; to Mr. John Ballinger of the National Library of Wales, Mr. Walter Spurrell, and Professor J. M. Lewis for the loan of photographs; while I owe to my uncle, Mr. Percy Percival of Berrow Manor, the account in the Milford chapter of the birds on Skomar

Island. To name in full all the writers, live and dead, whose works have been quoted, from Gerald the Welshman to Sir John Rhys, would require another page: but I must not forget the claims of *Archæologia Cambrensis*, the bible and the encyclopædia of the Welsh antiquary, without which the labours of most of us would be vain.

The ensuing chapters, it is well to add, are based upon a very long acquaintance with the country, and upon almost as many journeys as they number; and in the sentimental retrospect the old landmarks and the new may at times seem confused, or an English mile be turned into a Welsh one. But the book is not a gazetteer, and it purposely omits much that can be had in every guide-book. The best check upon its record in the matter of distances, coast-roads and the like, is a good chart; and overleaf will be found a list of maps in the Ordnance Survey covering the five Welsh shires whose sea-board figures in its pages.

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The South Wales Coast

CHAPTER I

CHEPSTOW AND THE WYE

It was market-day when we got to Chepstow, and droves of sheep and cattle from the country were being driven through the town to the market-pens by the railway station. Under the flanking arch of the "Beaufort Arms" a lively Welsh ram made a charge at us ending in a leap, shoulder high; and for the first time in my experience Chepstow streets appeared wide awake. For within that arch Beaufort Square and the town about it have as a rule the appearance of living upon the recollection of past market-days, an ancient siege or so of the Castle, and the memory of Henry Marten the Regicide.

But once you relate the town to the countryside and the old forest tracts for whose timber it once served as river-port, all becomes changed. Then the west-country air blows down the Wye valley loaded with the true Monmouthshire spice, and mixes persuasively with the salt breath of the tide under the Castle and the bridge. The Castle, cold at first to the traveller's mind, as castles aré apt to be, begins to rekindle in the picture. It assumes again the name it bore in Domesday Book: "Castellum de Estrighoeil" — a name

puzzling at first, which, as you think it over, seems fairly to bristle with military threats, and far more than the Saxon Chepstowe (Cheap Stowe) holds the clue to the original site. Possibly it was Roman to begin with? Strata Julia, the Welsh of which is Ystrad Iwl—Ystrigoil? Possibly there was another British name before the Roman? But it is clear at any rate that under the title of Chepstow you have a British camp and a Roman station, a Norman castle and an English town in a Welsh country which gradually grew under cover of the Castle, and was approached by what had been a Roman road, the old Vicinal Way.

You lost the old sense of the town and its approaches in coming here by train, instead of walking or riding the road from Gloucester—the turnpike still called by the people the *Street*. Tramping that stretch of road, you would experience what it is in an old country highway, and for choice one going west and following a Roman lead, that gets hold of mortal man, and tells him he is walking with the dust of the feet of fifty generations and more on his boots. However, even as you hurry by rail down the Severn with the river appearing and disappearing on your left and the *Street* some two or three farms away on your right, you may recover something of the mediæval traveller's mood, and carry from Lydney mixed ideas of an old weather-god like Lud and of a forester from the Forest of Dean like Madawc the son of Twrgadarn. With the final drop into the Wye Valley over Twt Hill, through which the train tunnels, cutting you off from Gloucester, you are in debatable land. For Monmouthshire, like Alsace and Lorraine, is a mixed country. It is not England; it is not, at any rate in its eastern

or Wye borders, Wales. In its wild aspect it is absolute Welsh, however, of the unmistakable kind found in the old tales, and in the western valleys it still speaks the old tongue. It has its deep wooded Wye Valley, its strong castles like Estrighoeil, Goodrich, or St. Briavel's, built high above the river; its hermit's chapel, like St. David's cell above the Chepstow ferry; and its churches, like Llancaut (Llancoed), hid in deep riverside coppices.

Every old bridge, and every new bridge that stands where an old one stood, has its traditions. Chepstow Bridge has one memory which brings home to you the notion of empty space crossed by a single giddy plank; the notion you find in the ballad of Sir Owain:—

> "The brigge was as heigh as a tour
> And as scharpe as a rasour,
> And narrow it was also:
> And the water that there ran under
> Brend o' lightning and of thonder,
> That thocht him mickle wo."

This actual story of the traveller-by-night who came late to Chepstow Bridge goes back to the day when the Bridge was a wooden one, with planks so sprung and tenoned that in case of flood they lifted with the water. And it was at times, says the local recorder, "very dangerous in crossing, because the planks which formed the flooring rose and fell with the tide, so that it seemed like walking on stilts." Once, after a very heavy flood, the bridge had to be put under repair, and the flooring was removed, only one or two planks being left for foot-passengers. The place was well lighted, and a

man stationed to warn passengers of their danger: but on this particular night it proved so stormy that the lights were blown out, and the bridge-keeper, concluding that no one would attempt to cross, retired to shelter. After midnight, however, a traveller on horseback was heard knocking on the door of the inn, at the bridge end, affirming that he had just crossed. The innkeeper said it was impossible; but, recognising the man's voice, he opened the door. In the morning the traveller repeated his story of having crossed the bridge; whereupon his host took and showed him the plank he must have passed over, "at the same time pointing to the gulph below." The man was so moved thereupon to his vitals by the danger he had unwittingly run, that his nerve gave way, and it was some time before he could retake his road.

The oldest Chepstow bridge of all was Roman and above the Castle, and the road cutting in the steep cliff that led down to it, and some broken abutments and piers, could still be seen at low water within living memory. This was the work of Julius Frontinus, who is credited with giving a name to Ystrad Iwl. The first Norman castle was only the usual timbered structure on the verge of the cliff, and the first builder on the site was William FitzOsborn, Earl of Hereford, "who cherished an enormous cause by his boldness," and fortified the place to guard this corner of his wide possessions. "He slew many, and died by the sword." His son, Roger de Britolio, turned rebel, lost Chepstow; whereafter it fell to the Clares and Richard Strongbow. Through Richard's daughter, Isabel, it went by marriage then to the Marshalls, of whom we shall hear

TOWN GATE, CHEPSTOW.

From a drawing by Mr. T. H. Thomas.

To face p. 16.

again. These Clares, Strongbows, Marshalls, and the rest are hard to individualise; but among them are to be found the originals of the knights who live again in the *Morte D'Arthur* and the *Mabinogion*.

An artist in antiquities once went to Chepstow Castle to sketch its walls. But the afternoon was sultry and the courts were hot and airless, and he ended by sitting down on a wall in one of the courts, overcome by the smell of hot ivy, and dozing away some centuries. In that taking he saw an immense man, dressed in armour, against the sky, shining in the sun. The figure stood upon the edge of the wall at the landward side of the Castle, bright and stiff as a metal figure.

The sleeper thought, "That is Richard—Richard Strongbow—and he is going to fall."

Thereupon Richard stiffly began to sway and topple over, sure enough; and yet he did not quite fall. While the knight was still at that uncomfortable angle, the dreamer woke up to see a sturdy little parson escorting a tired lady over the ruins, and telling her everything, without pity. It was his voice repeating "Richard Strongbow!" that had evoked the dream.

To-day, Chepstow Castle, built at as many different periods as there are courts contained in it, gives you a quite excessive notion of the original place. That was a plain keep only, first of wood, then of stone, based on the rock, whose remains you can discover in the third court, much altered later, and now called the Chapel. The structure was some ten paces broad and thirty long; and in fact the early Norman castles did not give their occupants, if a garrison is allowed for, very much room.

Most of the Castle, as it stands, was of the second term; for there was an Old Castle era and a New Castle era to reckon within the castle-building centuries; and Chepstow grew greatly as time went on. The earlier type of building, built at any time between the Conquest and the death of Rufus, was a plain strong-house or keep, chiefly made of wood, intended like a larger suit of armour to protect a few men; and it was set on a tump, or rock, or any convenient old Roman or British site. The latter kind of castle was made for comfort in living, as well as for defence: the type that grew at last into a huge castellated enclosure, like Caerphilly or Alnwick.

The round towers of the southern end of Chepstow Castle, which give so much character to the building, and resolve so graciously the salient curves and water-worn lines of the Wye under the Striguil rock, were built, I believe, by Roger Bigod. And finally the true praise of this Castle is the recognition of its natural fitness there on its river-cliff. Its containing walls and towers have a structural relation to the site; and the noble mason-work above, and the natural strata below, and the details of the surrounding scene are as much of a piece as if man's work had grown out of Nature's. This is a test to which all buildings, set in fine surroundings, must conform, or fail, as so many modern buildings do fail. The tubular railway bridge at Chepstow, hard, straight, abrupt, breaks with every natural form about it; and the Castle quarrels with it at every juxtaposition.

The ghost of Henry Marten the Regicide, as I said, rather bothers one in exploring Chepstow Castle to-day. Within the first court, the tower

which imprisoned him at once confronts you on the left. The Castle's history is apt in local gossip to begin and end with Marten, though he was but one among many famous inmates, from Fitz-Osborn, who was there first, and the de Clares, the great castle-dealers of the south, to Jeremy Taylor. But Chepstow Castle saw less fighting in mediæval days than might have been expected, because it was so strong. The defences that guard its four courts show how strong it was, and as one mounts from the river-chamber to the towers and gazes eastward upon the Gloucestershire landscape, one realises that the place was all but impregnable till cannon were invented. After that it had to yield to both King and Parliament in turn. In the Civil War Cromwell came once to see his guns batter it; but did not stay to see it fall. It was in 1645 that, after a desperate siege, Cromwell's men, under Colonel Ewer, took the Castle, then held by Sir Nicholas Kemeys, with great slaughter. The Roundheads revenged themselves for the obstinacy of the defence by putting a fourth of the garrison to the sword in cold blood, and Kemeys among them. A wicked deed, to be remembered as you walk the courts.

Marten was lucky in his prison, and probably lived longer in it than he would have done out of it. His acrostic epitaph may be seen in the church. It shows a certain vigour and a rough wit, such as he was credited with:—

"*H*ere or elsewhere (all's one to you or me),
*E*arth, air, or water gripes my ghostless dust;
*N*one knows how soon to be by fire set free.
*R*eader, if you an oft-tryed rule will trust,
*Y*ou'll gladly do and suffer what you must."

The last line in the Marten verse rings proverbially:—

"*Not* how you end, but how you spend your dayes."

After the Castle has been explored, St. Mary's Church can be reached viâ Bridge Street and Church Street. The church has much individuality; many restorations have not destroyed its Norman lines. Its nave suggests that the building was originally designed for a priory church of some state. The canopied tomb in the chancel is that of Henry, second Earl of Worcester, who died in 1549. Chepstow Bridge lies at the foot of Bridge Street, and brings river, town, and Castle into a lazy guide-book perspective, like something in an old print.

I had always thought that Hawker's Hill, one of the narrow lower streets, had really been a street given up to the hawkers who had used the town as a convenient place of resort. But once a farmer, walking with me in a field a mile above Tintern, said, pointing over the river, "Just there lies Hawker's Dyke." He meant Offa's, so I suppose Hawker's Hill is Offa's too. G. pointed out a window in Hawker's Hill which had evidently once been ecclesiastical. Bridge Street, near the church, used to be called St. Ann's Street, after the chapel of that name, in time turned into a bark-house. Oak-bark from the Forest of Dean used to be one of the chief exports here.

The old *Cambrian Traveller's Guide* speaks of the *Priory* of St. Kynemark on "a pleasant eminence to the west of the town" (not far from Piercefield Lodge), which was, like so many religious houses, turned into farm walls—at St.

Kynemark's Farm. Again, "In the town are the remains of several chapels. Near the Beaufort Arms are two stone buildings, used for a barn and coach-house; one having a Norman and the other a pointed-arched doorway. Opposite the Beaufort Arms is a small vault, under Fydell's long room; the stone roof is vaulted and engroined. Another old religious edifice adjoins Powis's Almhouse. A priory for monks of the Benedictine Order was founded here soon after the Conquest, called Strigule, or Striguil, monastery. It constituted a cell to the abbey of Corneille, in Normandy." But where is "Fydell's long-room" now? Lost in an irrevocable Georgian antiquity.

Turning coastwards, on the search for remains, you look first for St. Tecla's Chapel, which sailors and others call Treacle Chapel, perched on a rock right at the entrance to the Wye. Tecla was the daughter of a chief of Gwynedd, old North Wales: how she came so far south I do not know. She seems to bear a close resemblance to the type of hermitess found in the Sir Percival and Grail stories; indeed, is she not like Sir Percival's sister? Her end was tragic. Both Danish and Irish pirates often sailed up the Severn Sea and entered the Wye: and one band spied the cell of the unfortunate Tecla. Let us hope they did not linger out her death.

Before you leave the Wye, the track of the sea-raiders who sailed up it and raided places as far above Tintern as Symond's Yat ought to tempt you to boat up the stream with the tide. The Wynd Cliff and Tintern Abbey can be made part of the voyage. Last time I saw the abbey, late in April, the orchards around it were in full blossom, and through every window in turn as one passed

the crystal boughs stared in and gave an indescribable radiance to the walls. It made one think of the fabled Apple-Isle :—

> "There blooms the gleaming deathless tree
> Of which the birds with harmony
> Of many a song intone the Hours
> Amid the fragrant apple-flowers.
>
> And on the silent, listening lawns
> Are flowers of rarest radiance ;
> And shining plains where song is loud
> Lie southward like a silver cloud."

The companion scene to this belongs to the same record. It was a misty morning, not very good for such an expedition, and the sight of a house —a corn-miller's—which had caught fire the night before, whose walls still smouldered and sent a thin wisp or two of smoke to join the mist, seemed to threaten a bad day. But reaching the foot of the Wyndcliff, after skirting some woods full of wild-garlic mixed with lily-of-the-valley, I decided to climb it from the ridiculous tourist's or stage-carpenter's moss-cottage where you pay sixpence for the privilege.

About three-quarters of the way up the mist grew lighter, as if some one were puffing it away from the trees. Another twenty feet up, and the palest blue sky imaginable began to appear overhead, with a sun pale-white as a pewter spoon. Finally, having reached the summit and gained a point where nothing came in the way, I saw the mist rolling away below like thin muslin, and leaving the lower valley clear. Then, after a pause, came the miracle. A sort of second sky appeared, uncertainly repeating the first, and in

Photo by] [*Williams & Curnuck, Newport, Mon.*

TINTERN ABBEY.

the perspective an aerial promontory and beyond that a sailing-vessel were to be discovered apparently high in air. The lower sky was the Sea of Severn, and the vision was that of the meeting of the waters in the April sun. There lay the Severn (whose great tide often flows grey or milk-blue, to ebb tinged with rich mud, yellow or brown) like a creature of the sky; and the Wye was tricked out with the same light bright colours.

CHAPTER II

THE "OLD SEVERN CROSSING"—PORTSKEWETT—THE SEVERN TUNNEL—WENTWOOD

TRAVELLING west from Chepstow, you have a choice of routes. The ten-mile level between the mouth of the Wye and the mouth of the Usk is not what most men find exciting and they usually contrive to pass it by at high railway speed. But it edges a countryside that has at every stage some ruined chapel, some fine old house or other, some castle like Caldecot on the flat, or Llanvair on a hill, that gives history to a scene; and it is backed by one of the few aboriginal extents of wild forest left in the country—the forest of Gwent or Wentwood.

The railway for a space runs pretty close to the water; the main road is a couple of miles away inland. But you ought to leave the highway after passing Pwll Meyrick in order to go and see Mathern and Moynes Court: or you can take a shorter way across the fields. Mathern has a church like an old noble dame, that tells of age well borne, and it is so placed as to enlarge its Norman details and tall tower. One of the Welsh knights or chiefs who became saints, a typical romance-figure—Tewdric, petty king of Morganwg—lies here; the founder of the church.

His epitaph speaks of him as Theodoric "commonly called St. Thewdrick"—accounted a martyr because he had taken to a holy life voluntarily, giving up his crown to his son. But a Saxon invasion called him again to the field. A battle at Tintern followed, where he was mortally hurt. He begged his son Maurice to carry him home; but the mortal pangs gat hold on him when they reached Mathern. There he died, and his last wish was that a church should be built on the spot. A stone coffin was unearthed there in 1881.

The wooded rocks at St. Pierre near by start up dramatically to tell you of the miles of the forestland of Wentwood which Tewdrick hunted. In mediæval days they ran from the sea-borders without a break west and north to the Usk Valley. It was a perfect romance-forest, a forest of the *Mabinogion*. As you explore it, you find at every turn the very trees, or their direct offspring, that gave reality to the tales of the countryside. "And he did not choose the pleasantest and most frequented road, but that which was the wildest and most beset by thieves and robbers and venomous beasts. And they came to a high-road, which they followed till they saw a vast forest, and they went towards it, and they saw four armed horsemen come forth from the forest." This is from a page of the *Mabinogion*—a tale saturated with Gwentian local colour and perfume; and the four armed horsemen are its inevitable creatures. They will overtake you, if you should follow a road like that leading from Caer Went; they will start out again and again from the wood, as you pursue your way north-west.

The right point from which to approach

Wentwood is from Portskewett, about two miles south-west of Mathern, but over three by the road round by St. Pierre. You may not, remembering the days before the Severn Tunnel was made, think of it as a forest landmark; but its name is corrupted from Porth-is-Coed, the port under the wood. It is hard now to rescue its washed-away waterside purlieus; but they once stretched far into the side-channel. Indeed, Portskewett figures in the Triads as one of the three chief harbours of Wales. You ought to take the chance of a very low ebb (say, in a dry September) to explore the lines of the lost harbour at the aber of the Nedern or Troggy. Colonel Morgan pointed out long ago the names of spots in the channel, which were once dry land. "Gruggy" is a queer name to fish out of the salt water, for it comes either from "crugyn," a mound or tump; or Gryg, heather. Bedwin means birch-grove; and other such woody places lie drowned off Portskewett.

Harold built there a house whose foundations have left their traces close to the church, and in the church itself is a Saxon tympanum, whose like is nowhere else to be seen in the country. Harold meant to entertain King Edward the Confessor in state at the new house, and tradition declares they met there. If you turn to Florence of Worcester you find the rest of the story, in which Tostig, Harold's brother, raided his palace and camp, in revenge, it is said, for the preference shown to Harold by the King. Harold's Welsh raids would make a good fighting saga. They are mixed with the deadly feuds of two Gruffydds —Gruffydd ab Llewelyn and Gruffydd ab Rhydderch, of whom the first was a man of temper

and resource, fit to range with Harold's own powers. He deserved better than the cruel death he suffered from his own countrymen—the outcome of one of the endless Welsh vendettas which went on under the tribal order and disorder.

My recollection of Portskewett dates back to the time when there was no Severn Tunnel, and travelling from Bristol to Carmarthen, we alighted on the Somerset side, to cross by broad-decked paddle-boats: a sort of miniature Holyhead-to-Kingstown experience.

Out of all these crossings one made at Easter comes back clearly to mind. It was blowing and raining hard. The Severn was rough and dirty enough for any open sea, tumbling and rolling with choppy muddy yellow billows before a west wind. It was more daunting than Holyhead itself in the teeth of a gale—the flooded Severn, about an hour after high water, looked so malevolent. The wind, too, in the station at Portskewett — crying, buffeting, howling, and whistling—was such as only Dickens with his uncanny faculty of describing the elements at odds with roof and walls, could describe. I have often thought of that crossing when being sucked through the Severn Tunnel in an air-tight, sulphureous cylinder of a railway compartment in about a tenth part of the time: a great saving, no doubt, but a traveller's experience not at all to be compared with the other.

More than a generation later, a September evening took me again to Portskewett. The old waterside hotel was an hotel no longer; but it let me have pleasant quarters for the night; and after supper I walked under the stars to the waterside,

and heard the lazy flap of the tide against the causeway, while in the distance sounded what seemed to be a noise of forge-hamers, or heavy clamping, possibly from the works at Sudbrook.

An early start next morning brought Crick into view betimes, and beyond it the open road to Caerwent. There was in the air the sweet, clean smell of corn in the field, ready to be led; and flocks of buntings, finches, and hedge-sparrows, swoln with new wheat, were to be spied flying up as some harvest cart or stray harvester disturbed them. But the high-road was almost empty. The only being I met during the first half-mile was a black man, in what might be a seaman's Sunday clothes. What was he doing on the road from Caerwent? When he had gone by, far ahead of me, a string of what looked rather like a troop of women, continually changing their order and crossing to and fro, appeared on the dusty highway. Presently, one of them fell down, and then they resolved themselves into a troop of school children. Just below the rise to Caerwent village, where one tries to figure the last entrance to the old Roman town, I overtook them. The child that had fallen was a small boy, fair-haired, burstingly plump and well cared for; he was still sobbing in a perfunctory way; while two little girls held his fat hand and several others formed a body-guard in white pinafores, behaving as if he was a hero being led in triumph to the camp. A penny dried his tears. In the last glimpse I had, the youngsters were clustered like white butterflies round a small village shop, with lollypops in the window; no doubt very like those on which the small boys and girls of the camp formerly spent their Roman halfpence.

Everywhere at Caerwent the Roman illusion

Photo by] [*Williams & Curnuck, Newport, Mon.*

CALDECOT CASTLE.

keeps cropping out in the Monmouth village. The excavation-field had just revealed, when I saw it, a gateway in a ten-foot cutting, out of which climbed a labourer. The resurrection of a live Roman soldier in helmet and tunic, or a slave with his rations, a solid wheaten cake, in his hand, would not have been much more startling. The wheaten cake was suggested by a twopenny loaf which I saw a Roman baker handing in at a door.

But Caerwent, though they do say, mixing no doubt the traditions of two Caers in Gwent, that the sea once came up to its walls, is too far from our main route to be further exploited here. Every year the archæological men are laying bare more of the old lines of the Roman city; and its map will be made and its record written, plain as that of Pompeii, some five or six years hence.

If you return to Portskewett from Caerwent, you can take another road back, viâ Caldecot, after exploring the old wall and round buttress behind and below the church. Caerwent Church itself, by the way, is half Roman, its walls being largely built out of the old buildings of the Caer. In about a mile and a half this road brings you to Caldecot village, and so to the Castle; one of the few purposely built in this country on a wet site, with the marsh used for defence.

It was a hot, sleepy afternoon when I reached Caldecot on my way back from Caerleon. No wayfarers at all were on the road, and in the scattered village doors were shut and houses seemed asleep. Outside an inn a hawker's cart was standing; the people in the churchyard were not quieter than those in the houses. It was hard to find any one to serve as a key-bearer to the Castle, which is not open every day to the public. It was

equally hard, having reached it, to imagine it had ever been meant for war by the De Bohuns, so deep was the afternoon quiet about its sunburnt mounds and round towers.

Caldecot Castle was built in three pieces at three different times. The four or five carved Maloresque heads on the west side of the machicolated gateway tempt one to think the whole building later than it is. The oldest part is the keep, on its made mound, with its queer excrescent smaller tower, which leaves one conjecturing if a live cock or a larger biped was walled up in it. There is some mystery about it. This was built about 1150–1175. After that the De Bohuns went on building from time to time, and occasionally pulled down an old piece to make a new. The whole area covered is enough for a whole village. The ruins came at length into the hands of a most conscientious restorer in Mr. Cobb, its present owner, who gives us a wonderful idea of the place in its fighting prime. In his cartoon the main structure fairly bristles with timber, rather like an ironclad with its torpedo spars out. Caldecot's towers and walls have great corbels and big holes (going through the parapet), which must have been intended to hold timber struts for active defence. In this extraneous timbering one has a relic possibly of the earlier kind of Norman castle, which was mainly a wooden erection with stone ballast, earthen dyke, and bristling palisade.

Caldecot is another of the places that get their name from the neighbouring forest—Wentwood. In Welsh, it is Cil-y-Coed—edge of the wood. The De Bohuns, its lords and chief builders, were earls of Hereford; and their family history and some of its scrolls will be found worth deciphering. The De Bohun shield, with its golden lioncels rampant

(Humphrey, the fourth earl, figured six of them in an azure field, with a bend argent cotised or), seems designed for the ornate knights of the later *Mabinogion*, or one to be borne by Sir Gilbert in the *Morte D'Arthur*. There was a Sir Gilbert de Bohun whose shield had the lioncels too, but distinguished by having his bend or with three escallops gules charged upon it.

> "In that tyme was the manner so,
> Whan yonge knightis shuld sheldis show."

One would like to know how much of the foundations of Caldecot, which had to be well and surely found in that marshy site, came from Caerwent.

From Caldecot it is about a mile to Sudbrook Camp. The camp is on the very edge of the Severn, which has been eating away the site slowly all these years. There you realise again the old Severn Sea of the primitive invaders and the three invasions of this coast. The camp was one of many which seem to have been made with some general idea of connected use along the Severn estuary. On the Bristol side there was Oldbury, and nearly opposite it, on the Chepstow side, Sedbury; Beachley and St. Tecla's could be seized and held at need. The Danes who made—or in some cases adopted—these camps, returned yearly to the Severn and the Wye. The evidence of the fight at Symond's Yat, and the tales of the Welsh Saints, lend weight to an earlier custom of this kind. But the later security of this coast is shown at Sudbrook by the site of the chapel. It stood within the very dyke of the Danes' Camp, a ruin to be named with other dismantled chapels on the Welsh coast.

Sudbrook Chapel has not been used for church

service now for two centuries and more. The last certain notice of its use dates back to 1755, and to the burial of a sea-captain, by name Blethyn Smith. The old place appealed to him, as did Mathern to more than one bishop. He asked in his will to be buried "in the eastern end of the chancel of the decayed church of Sudbrook, as near the wall as may be, attended by six seafaring men as bearers —my coffin covered with the ensigns of colours of a ship instead of a pall." A brass plate was put on the wall over his grave, but it has long since disappeared. At Sudbrook you can still picture the ship-master's funeral—especially if there should be a Bristol barque going down channel to help you to recall the old days before steam came in. Then the ship's boat and the six sailors give way to a Viking's war-vessel, such as that they dug out of the mud in making Newport Docks, and the chapel vanishes and you see the Danish pirates run into the neighbouring pill and prepare to use the camp as a base for their next raid inland. Much history lies embedded in the mud bank at Sudbrook.

CHAPTER III

NEWPORT, OR NEWCASTLE-UPON-USK—ST. WOOLOS'S AND STOW HILL—REBECCA'S DAUGHTERS AND THE SEVERN PIRATES—A WELSH MINNESINGER.

You may go to Newport to-day and spy there only a great commercial city and a seaport in the making. For as you cross the Usk by rail you may chance to miss a passing glimpse of the Castle above the water or the tidal mud. Outside the station yard, too, everything that first appears is aggressively new and crude—the trams, the big, motley buildings, the busy vista right and left. But amid the hubbub you can, with a little patience, find the lines of the old town that lay between "Castell-ar-Wysg" and the noble old church of St. Gwynllyw up Stow Hill.

Its place on the coast at the mouth of the Usk brought it custom formerly, just as its docks and railways do now. To-day the "new-castle," newest of the town, is the railway station. Many years ago, when trains used to be parliamentary and slow as reform, a small party of travellers got to Newport one wet evening, after some twelve hours' weary travel. They had come all the way from the other Newcastle (upon-Tyne), but alighted here to change trains for Carmarthen, much too hungry to think of any connection

the two towns might happen to have. In half an hour more the Milford night mail would pass: and (for I was one of the party) we had time for tea in the refreshment-room: wonderful, strong, well-stewed tea, and delicious thin bread and butter of home-made Welsh bread such as you never see in refreshment-rooms nowadays. Again, many years later, when the National Eisteddfod was held in the town, it fell to me to watch some forty trains arrive one afternoon and disgorge their crowds. Welsh hill-folk, country people, miners from the mining valleys, singing men and girls, small, bright-eyed women, and strings of children went by in that crowd. It gave one the sense of a people *en fête*, a nation in movement. My anxiety about one atom in that multitude, the one expected face that did not arrive, lent a painful interest to all those phantasmagoric faces. It occurred to me then that we have the same anxiety on a railway platform to-day that our forbears had in the embrasure of a castle, or in a wattled booth of the Gwentian hills five, six, seven centuries ago. Our surroundings change; our emotions never.

For a picture of Tudor Newport, turn to Leland. He speaks of the great stone gate by the bridge; a second in "the High strete to passe thorough, and the 3(rd) at the west end of the toune." He adds that "the fairest of the toun" is all in one street, and that the town is in ruin. He describes it another time as "a pretty strong town"; but "I marked not whyther yt were waulled or no." However, the walls, as well as the three gates, were standing and in good order then; and the office of the Murenger was still kept up.

The Castle dates back to 1140, or earlier, when

Photo by] [*Williams & Curnuck, Newport, Mon.*

NEWPORT CASTLE (LOW TIDE).

it was begun by Robert, Earl of Gloucester, who had married Mabel, daughter of Fitzhamon. The year is one to be double-scored in the Gwent tradition. Robert was a great castle-builder; a shrewd intervener, too, between the two peoples from whose marriage he sprang; and his nephew was Giraldus Cambrensis, a pioneer of the new literary life of the country. As parcel of the lordship of Morganwg, Newport often figures in the traffic betwixt the Welsh and Normans. When Henry II., on his return from Ireland, recalling his long dispute with Iorwerth ap Owain of Caerleon, paused at Newport in 1171–1172, he sent a safe-conduct to Iorwerth and his two sons, that they might come and do homage and settle their grievances on either side. But some soldiers of Newport intercepted and slew, near Usk, Iorwerth's eldest son when he was on the way to join his father, and Iorwerth, seeing in it very naturally Henry's treachery, went home vowing revenge. Calling the Welsh around him, he marched through Gwent into Gloucester, doing great havoc. Newport Castle, after the death of Earl Robert and Mabel his wife, passed through the hands of many famous owners, including the De Clares and De Spencers. In the year 1645 we hear of it as in ruins. Newport was a walled town formerly, with three town gates, the last of which left standing was in the High Street. The house of the Murenger, whose office was to act as wall-keeper and toll-collector, was still to be seen a hundred years ago, near the High Street gateway.

We must leave the lower town now and go up Stow Hill to St. Woollos's, and look from the church on the crowded landscape—streets upon streets, houses and chimneys, docks and railways

—where once was the green prospect that Gwynllyw called after the ox with the black spot—Dutelich. Gwynllyw's Church, as you must know, got corrupted by degrees into St. Woollos's—one of many changes that came about in the anglicising of the Welsh place-names.

Now, St. Woollos's is a church wherein you see what it is always interesting to see—the different stages and layers of its growth. It has a fair tower, a still fairer Norman door; but its peculiar feature is the aboriginal building, some fifteen paces long, between the tower and the later church. This is known as St. Mary's Chapel; and Mr. Baring-Gould, who has a keen eye for eccentric antiquity, points out the resemblance between this early building and the low western ante-chapel at the abbey-church of St. Fronto, Perigueux. Both represent the original early Christian church, he says, built on these sites. If this be so, then Gwynllyw probably lies here, under the floor of St. Mary's Chapel.

As you look over the Sea of Severn and the great seaport from Stow Hill, you have several sea tales to call to mind which belong to the scene—one of them to the very church itself. In early days the Severn Sea was a notorious pirates' run. The Danish raiders often brought their boats into the Usk, and you have heard how they murdered St. Tecla in her islet at the mouth of the Wye. An old Danish ship was found here in 1878, when the Alexandra Dock was being enlarged. It lies in the town Museum now. It was some seventy feet long and, at its full beam, twenty feet wide. What became of the crew? To answer this you must turn to the saga of the Orcadians, the sacrilegious Welsh King of the North, and the

Holy Gwynllyw, who became the Terrible Rider of the Elements.

Griffith, King of the North, driven by war from his own land, and fearing his enemies (whom William, the old King of the English, subdued), sailed to the Orcades. There, bent on revenge and piracy, he got the Orcadians to join him and descend on the coasts of Britain. Twenty-four large warships made their fleet, with which they sailed through the Irish Sea, and at length made their way into the Sea of Severn. There they landed at the mouth of the Usk, and, armed with lances and axes, ravaged and spoiled the country. These wicked raiders spied as they went the church of St. Woollos, which had been locked for protection against their thieving hands. But they broke it open, and stole the precious vessels that were there and carried them off to their ships, and so to the Isle of Barry. There, however, grievous trouble and great sorrow began to gather over them, and they were driven to embark and hoist sail for the Orcades.

But terror of judgment! no sooner were they at sea than they saw a tremendous figure, a terrible horseman riding in the sky, riding after them night and day, pursuing them wherever they turned without cease. That giant Horseman of the Elements, who could he be? He was the holy Gwynllyw, who was sent from heaven to overtake and punish them in their sins. Their vessels' sails were torn by the raging violence of the winds; nor by their oars could they make headway, while their compass was broken, and the sailors cried, "Evil is our shipmate, we fight Powers immortal and beyond us; the fighting of mortal man is vain!"

With that the vessels were driven on the rocks, and all save two were wrecked and broken in pieces; and even the men that might have been saved in a frenzy rushed against and destroyed one another. Only two ships were saved; and these were King Griffith's, who would not partake of the robbery or enter the church; and he it was who, when he had made peace with King William, told him how the Holy Gwynllyw had come from heaven to avenge the desecration of his church by the fierce pirates of the Orcades.

The more one thinks of this legend the stranger it grows; but the part in it of King Griffith is rather sinister. He lured on the Orcadians to their doom, but he escaped. He was their Ate.

One more story of St. Woollos's, and we are done. It is important, because it shows the real cause of the defeat of Harold at the battle of Hastings. It appears that in Earl Harold's time ship's toll was paid by ships lying in the mouth of the Usk. But one day a Saxon trading-vessel came to port, and refused to pay; and Rogut (a grandson of King Griffith) thereupon cut its anchor-cable, and carried off the anchor to St. Woollos's Church. But the sailors complained to Earl Harold, and he, moved with great anger, began to lay waste all the country of Wentloog. The Gwentians carried their goods and country produce—corn and meat and cheese—to the church; but the greedy wolves broke in there and, without seeing the lost anchor, began to steal all they could lay hands on. Then to satisfy their hunger they cut into the cheeses brought by the country-folk; but behold, the cheeses were all red and bloody inside! Harold's men, horrified at this sight, began hastily to restore all they had stolen;

and Earl Harold himself, pricked with compunction, made an offering on the altar, and promised he would never more violate that blessed sanctuary. But all in vain; for it befell that in the following month Harold was slain at the battle of Hastings by William of Normandy for this and his other sins and wickednesses.

While you are on Stow Hill you may recall the strange hubbub that used to be heard there at Stow Fair, up to the year 1870. Hogarth alone could do justice to the scenes that used to startle the Fair-field and surround the Bull Inn and the old Six Bells Inn and even the churchyard of St. Woollos's, in the palmy days when thousands of miners and ironworkers came in from the mining valleys. Almost every whitewashed cottage on Stow Hill had its two or three barrels of beer at its door to supply the extraordinary thirst of the droughty ironworkers and other folk on this gaudy day; and next morning, it is said, the fields were sown with strange and unhappy objects—the men who had been sleeping off their debauch. Yes, only Hogarth or the author of "The Sleeping Bard" could describe the drinking carnival of Stow Hill as it used to be seen.

A Welsh Hogarth, too, could best draft for us another riotous spectacle of the period: the Chartist march on the town on the 4th of November, 1839. It seems as if the old tradition that made the Castle below and St. Woollos's above fighting landmarks were being maintained. The mayor faced the rioters and read the Riot Act from the windows of the Westgate Hotel, in whose wainscot bullet-marks may still be seen. The rioters were themselves led by a quondam magistrate, John Frost, who had himself been four times

mayor of Newport. He was a man of eccentric and combative temper, who had been struck off the justices' roll by Lord John Russell because of his noisy opinions and irrepressible Radicalism. He was not unlike some of the early chiefs of Gwent, who were always at war; for he was tireless in opposition. But while they sometimes, like Gwynllyw, grew pious and became hermits and saints, when the energies of youth gave out, Jack Frost never suffered his mind to thaw. Possibly he did not manage his riot very well: he did little, it is certain, to save his men from panic when the word was given and the soldiers fired from the windows of the Westgate Hotel. He and two other leaders were sentenced to death, and then reprieved and transported, for their part in the affair. Fifteen years later they were pardoned, and Frost returned home a septuagenarian, and lived twenty-three years more, his zeal for reform as keen as ever, to die in 1877. There is all the material of grotesque romance in his long and chequered tale, from the days when he was a draper with a taste for battle and a town mayor to his march on Newport, his death-sentence and transportation, and his return safe home to an unabated old age. He had every wish to be a popular hero, and, most significant fact, he lived to see every one of the popular reforms he had fought for carried out.

There are still a few notable shy spots near Newport worth discovering, though the guide-books avoid them. The other-self of a country is often to be surprised in these overgrown haunts, one of which asks for a page or more here at the end of the chapter. It is one that calls up the figure of Dafydd ab Gwilym, the Poet of the

Leaves, a fourteenth-century Welsh Minnesinger who was, all told, the most exquisite rhymer and the most imaginative Wales has had. The whole country was his; he roamed its leagues of forest, a blessed vagabond, and knew it from end to end. But in this country the base of his journeys was always the house at Gwern-y-Cleppa, near Maes-Aleg, now called Bassaleg—the house of Ivor Hael or Ivor the Generous.

It was one very sultry August afternoon when I set off to find the place in the wood where stood the ancient mansion of Ivor Hael. Beyond Bassaleg Station the dirt and smoke and grimy disorder of the colliery village made the heat thrice intolerable; but once the bridge over the river Ebwy was crossed I began to recover with an effort the lines of the fair green countryside that Dafydd knew. A by-road led me past a small farm, Fynnon Oer (Cold Well) to a field-path that skirted a wooded hill. With that hill for a shield from the outer world it was possible to believe in Ivor Hael. Across a broad dip and long meadow lay a wood, Gwern-y-Cleppa. There used to stand Ivor's vanished mansion, above which the air should still be stained with bands of firelight and more iridescent gleams than commonly fall through the trees of a wood.

One unlucky detour on the way led to an opening where a dead bullock had been dumped for the hounds or young pheasants of Ivor's successor. This made me hastily invoke the fine spirit of invective that Dafydd had always at hand wherewith to relieve himself in his predicaments. Happily the exact site, which I had overshot, was a breathing distance away. Standing on one of the foundation-walls, which Ivor's descendant, Lord

Tredegar, had recently unearthed, and, looking around, I found it possible to imagine away the later undergrowth and detect the actual lines of the close, the long, low house with its end-gables and blunt-thatched roof, and the green pleasaunce about it. To adapt some lines of Dafydd's, describing another house in another wood, far from here, where he and his love Morfudd used to meet:—

> "And I the man or woodman who
> Must walk the wood, and watch, and through
> The small-leav'd trees look as I pace
> To spy the roof there break the space,—
> A palace pack'd within a croft,
> With green leaves for an organ loft:
> Song's House, whose eaves no painter could
> Ever have painted, none but God."

In Ivor's house, said Dafydd, he was always sure of a welcome. The grace-cup was waiting to receive him at the door; his glove was filled with gold as he went away.

He was once rallied by a follower of Sir Peter le Sore, who said the bottom of one of Sir Peter's cups was worth all the cups in Ivor's house. To which Dafydd answered, "That the bottom of a cup might be valued in Sir Peter's house, but not in Ivor's, since the bottom of a cup was never seen there" for the exhaustless wine within it. Indeed, in more than one of his lyric odes Dafydd harps upon the "medd a gwin"—mead and wine—at Maesaleg, and he talks of Ivor as Father-of-all-Cheer. There is a song of parting, written when he was going on his Trouveur's journey to the north—one of those bardic circuits which the Welsh called "Clera"—whose rhymes are Ivor's joyous apotheosis. They are partly conceived in the tradi-

tional "high-falutin" mode of the Welsh family bard who sings the eulogy of his Mæcenas; but we discern at once in them, too, the note, breaking convention, of the original poet who used tradition or dropped it at will, and saw with his own eyes, and made his harp-strings out of his own Welsh sinews.

At Gwern-y-Cleppa, says Dafydd, he was like one of the three free fortunate guests at the court of King Arthur ("Tri thryddedog ac anfoddog Llys Arthur"). During the third quarter of the fourteenth century Ivor was in his flourish, and held his court here in the great old Welsh fashion. He and his wife Nest died of the plague about 1368, and the fatal news reached Dafydd as he travelled from the north to Llanbadarn in Cardiganshire, where his own house was.

A passage or so from his odes, written in the fluid four-footed couplets he preferred—a form that, Welsh as it is, relates him to the whole poetic mode of Europe at that time—must serve here as a taste of his art. He is very fond of writing colour-odes, ranged in one colour, as, for instance, among his white poems, a Swan-ode, a Snow-ode, a Hawthorn-ode; or, among his yellow, a Broom-song, or a song of his golden-haired beloved Morfudd. Take this foretaste as a Study in Gold, some lines of which he used twice over in separate poems without any hesitation. He is describing Morfudd's hair, whose "wine-bright laughing mouth" and whose cheeks, red as the Rose or the Rosy Cross, were his delight:—

"Aml o eurlliw, mal iarlles,
Gerllaw y tal, gorlliw tes;
Ac uwch ei deurudd rhyddawr
Dwybleth fal y dabl o aur."

Largesse of gold he wants to impress on you in this lyric picture: "Gold-colour, repeated over and over, like a countess's, about the forehead, with the high colour of sunshine; and above the two cheeks, red-gold—two broad plaits like the Golden Tables': For the unbraiding of them, long it might take;—such gold braids I have seen her let fall, like the wings of a yellow Archangel drooping upon white snow. Shoots, say of one stem; coils of one colour; a grove of yellow broom above the face; ay, gold-jewels like them in the shops of Chepe."

You get in this a suggestion of the true poetic ecstasy of the creature. The shops of Cheapside, too, had touched his errant fancy; he often returns to them, indeed, in his odes, and makes one think of the "Golden Cheapside" that Herrick knew centuries later. Probably the Welsh poet, too, had made one visit to London in Ivor's train, or in that of some Autolycus of the shires and "hundreds."

As you pass again through Newport streets you can stop before a jeweller's window in the High Street if you will, realising that a far greater town than the London of Dafydd's time has sprung up within a league of Ivor's house at Maesaleg.

Photo by] [*Williams & Curnuck, Newport, Mon.*

ST. WOOLOS'S CHURCH.

CHAPTER IV

CAERLEON-ON-USK—THE OLD CITY OF LEGIONS—ECHOES OF THE "MORTE D'ARTHUR"—ROMAN LADIES AND BRITISH PRINCES.

"Both Athens, Theabes, and Carthage too,
We hold of great renown,
What then, I pray you, shall we do
To poor Caerleon towne."

CHURCHYARD.

YOU may not think of Caerleon at once as a shipping-place; but it was once, in the day of small ships, a well-known Severn Sea port. It was the old port of Usk, as its neighbour three miles nearer the mouth of the river was the Newport. One reason for having a shipping-quay farther from the river-mouth may have been because it was safer from Severn pirates. And, after all, it is not so far inland as are many famous ports to-day—the other Newcastle, for instance.

We reached and crossed the bridge late one September evening, having, on the road out of Newport, passed St. Julian's in the dark without realising it. A light drizzle was falling, and the town was like a deserted place, whose darkness was but made more apparent by the few street-lamps and a dimly lit shop-window. It might

have been a benighted town of the Middle Ages; and I think we were not altogether sorry for the illusion.

Having found quarters at our appointed hostelry, we sallied out, while a simple mediæval supper of ham-collops and eggs was preparing, for further exploration. Across the street a very dim paraffin-lamp burned in a shop-window. Out of curiosity we gazed in, and saw faded jam-tarts there of an unnatural pallor and antiquity, and some slate-pencils. In such a shop, precisely, gazed the Roman boys long ago, save that there were no dulled panes of glass between. We resumed our wanderings, and saw another light, far away, which proved to be a wooden lamp-post—old, and even immensely old; older than Lucius, older than Severus and his two sons, older than Merlin and Arthur.

We dimly made out at the south-east side of the town what we took for the mound of the Castle, where the Norman keep had stood, and it recalled how the boy-king Arthur came out of his tower, and "under his gown a jesseraunt of double mail"; when King Lot had laughed at him and called Merlin a witch; and how a battle was fought between Arthur and the kings of Garloth and Gower.

"What will ye do?" said Merlin to them. "Ye were better for to stint. Ye shall not here prevail, though ye were ten so many."

"Be we well advised to be afraid of a dream-reader?" said King Lot.

With that Merlin vanished away. You may continue the tale in the *Morte D'Arthur*.

It was in Caerleon, too, that Arthur held his Whitsuntide feast, "in the most royalest wise that

might be, like as he did yearly," when, according to the famous old king's custom, he refused to eat till some portent or strange adventure came to light; and the predestined mysterious damsel of romance entered, and after her Gawain and Launcelot and Beaumains. And it was to Caerleon that disturbing letters came, addressed to Arthur and Gwenevere and Launcelot—all from King Mark; and King Arthur "mused of many things"; and Sir Launcelot was so wroth that "he laid him down on his bed to sleep," the letter in his hand; and Dinadan "stole the letter out of his hand, and read it word by word," and as a consequence made his lay of King Mark, and taught it to one harper, who taught it in turn to many harpers, who went singing it through Wales and Cornwall, "which was the worst lay that ever harper sang with harp or with any other instruments."

Next morning we rose from bed, I remember, with a sense of being unequal to our antique opportunity. Looking out of window, I saw a milk-cart driving by; it was built in the precise model of an old British chariot. The rain, too, was falling in a traditional British way. Luckily we had the Museum as a resource.

A little more and Caerleon Museum, which looks externally like the toy model of a classic temple, might have been a perfect village monument. As it is, one does not find it easy on a wet morning to rekindle any Roman warmth in its cold stones, or set free the rustling garments of a Cæsaria, or picture the wife of Cornelius Castus, with her old silver brooch clasping the kerchief about her neck and silver bracelets on her folded arms. But the thought of that poor child, Julia Iverna, who died

at sixteen and was buried at Bulmore, and whose mother must have loved her very dearly, presently opens this house of the dead. The ornaments of both of them are there; and some of the inscriptions that recall them, and some of the flakes and remnants whose shining may have helped to dazzle the eyes of the early Welsh romancists, a Geoffrey or a Gerald, are there too. What is very attractive to our eyes is the way in which flakes and bits of mediæval glass and small metal ornaments of Gerald's time—the twelfth century—are mixed with those of the day when Tacitus wrote. This is the great secret which Caerleon keeps close. It has mixed its memories, like its relics; and when for the twentieth time you are trying to separate the Roman soldiers from Arthur's men, and the Roman lines from the later walls and castellated defences added by a Llewelyn whose gryphon (on a bit of glass) is still to be seen, you suddenly realise that Arthurian tradition was partly grown on a Roman wall, and has kept the faint aroma of a thousand classical associations.

It was the second Legion that lay at Caerleon; and here, in the time of Claudius under Vespasian, its headquarters were maintained while its men fought and built, went off to the north in detachments, to help in the road-building and raising of the walls and forts of the North Tyne and Border country. Not only that; but they were the chief builders of the great sea-walls raised to protect the Level of Caldecot and the Level of Gwynllwg (Wentloog) from the Severn Sea. The busts or statues of a line of famous generals, and one or two emperors, would have to be set round the walls of Caerleon Museum, like those in the corridor of emperors at the British Museum, if we

were to rally to our aid all the contributors to the fame of the City of Legions. Yes, Agricola, and Severus, and Caracalla, and Geta, and Suetonius, and Constantine—who left Britain not so long before the supposed advent of Arthur.

When you recall Geoffrey of Monmouth's blazoned triumph of King Arthur in the City of Legions, you see clearly how Roman were its features: Roman, viewed at the end of an early mediæval vista, like a marble colonnade seen through stained glass. Geoffrey tells us how Arthur, after a series of Roman triumphs—not unlike Cæsar's own—after campaigns in Norway, Dacia, Aquitania, Gaul, after holding court at Paris, decides to hold a solemn thanksgiving, and pitches upon the City of Legions for that purpose.

"Upon the approach of the feast of Pentecost, Arthur," says Geoffrey, "resolved to hold a magnificent court, to place the crown upon his head, and to invite all the kings and dukes subject to him to that solemnity. And he pitched upon the City of Legions as a fit place wherein to hold it; for besides its wealth, great beyond that of other cities, its site upon the river Usk, near the Severn Sea, was most pleasant and fit for so high a solemnity. On one side it was washed by that noble river, so that those kings and princes who came from beyond the seas might readily sail up to the city. On the other side, the beauty of the groves and meadows, and the magnificence of the royal palaces with high gilded roofs adorning it, made it rival even the grandeur of Rome."

And it had, continues Geoffrey, two churches, one dedicated to the martyr Julius, and adorned by a choir of virgins, while the other, dedicated to

St. Aaron, was the third church metropolitan of Britain. Besides, there was a college of two hundred wise men and astronomers, who could tell Arthur by the stars what events were to happen at that time.

To Caerleon came, among the kings, Sater, King of Dyved, Cador, King of Cornwall, Cadwaladon, King of North Wales, Augusel (Angus?), King of Scotland, Urien, King of "Mureif." The three Archbishops of York, and London, and Caerleon (observe the equation of the last with the two first metropolitan sees) attended, too, in state. The last of the three arch-prelates was Dubricius, otherwise Dyvrig the Golden Tongued.

The present parish church of Caerleon is dedicated to Cadoc, for Llangattock is the parish in which the City of Legions stands. Its ecclesiastical tradition waxed and grew with its Arthurian myths. If it was a king's capital—why not an archbishop's seat? Dyvrig, and Cadoc, and David lend it their associations, and they build up its House of Fame, and bring tradition to the point where the Church was able to perpetuate it, and delicately idealise it, and join a Constantine legend to an Arthur legend, and put a halo about a Roman helmet; and magnify a simple hermit in his cave to the seventh dimension, till he towers, a prince, a primate of his Church.

Wonderful Caerleon, that can lift heroes, like pieces of ivory, from its dust! Arthur and Severus, Gwenevere and Cæsaria and Julia Iverna, Cadoc and David: they are the personages of its story.

To recall the Roman Isca Silurum, you ought to climb Christchurch Hill and look back from the

road as it nears the village. Then, imagine an extent of marsh-lands and tidal "rhines" (as they are called on either side of the Severn Sea) all about the City of Legions, and the city itself, square, very definite, very compact, raised on higher ground; with four straight roads approaching its four gates, south, east, west, and north. At the south gate the approach is by a twenty-two feet wide trestle-built bridge. The same bridge to all intents and purposes, patched from time to time, lasted on to modern times; lasted long enough for the Normans to build new defences at either end in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and for some of the Chartists to cross it on their way to Newport in 1839, and for Tennyson to walk over it in 1856. It was finally demolished about fifty years ago.

You can better picture the splendour of the place when you remember that it was one of the three great Roman centres in Britain. You can see the streets, the people, the officers' wives, the soldiers; here, in the heart of the town, are the houses, most of them either one-storied or having a lower storey of stone and an upper of timber, with timbered and shingled roofs. In the Forum, or market-building, there are steps and a colonnade; and on the steps are beggars, British market-women, and a Roman lady chaffering with one of them for a basket of apples or a jar of honey, a couple of barley-cakes or a brace of wild duck. One amphitheatre we trace by the oval called King Arthur's table; and of other extra-mural adjuncts we know there was one burial-place at Bulmore and another two miles further away. And within the walls are baths, cool porticoes, a couple of temples; and perhaps a

corner of the city where, as time went on, a couple of marble and stone arches and a column arose to mark some of the Roman triumphs in Britain. Every fragment you have in Caerleon Museum represents a whole. A single Roman brick, and Caerleon is rebuilt. You can still see Roman figures and Welsh knights pass in the town as you look back from Christchurch Hill—forms that seem to appear for a moment at the end of the street and then to disappear like a mirage. The recent excavations by the Roman surveyors have made the actual details of the place clear as Pompeii's.

According to Donovan in his tour of 1801, there was a Caerleon tradition that Arthur and his knights disappeared into the old amphitheatre.

"And here," says Donovan, "we were assured with the utmost gravity that in some evil hour of enchantment Arthur and two thousand of his valiant knights sunk into the abyss of the earth, in the midst of their jovial feasting"; that is, at the celebration of some gala day of the Round Table. It is added that Arthur himself was spirited away to Faerie; and so we have another of the many local legends of "Arthur's Sleep," associated also with Craig-y-Dinas, in the Vale of Neath, with a spot in the Black Mountains, near Gwynfe, with a mountain in the Bala region of North Wales, with a well at Cadbury (Camelot) in Somerset, and many other places.

"He is a king crowned in Faerie," says Lydgate, and shall yet resort—

> ". . . our Lord and sovereigne,
> Out of Faerie and reigne in Brittaine."

Any one who cares can go on pilgrimage to the city and evoke its ghostly king. "The Usk murmurs by the windows, and I sit like King Arthur in Caerleon," says Tennyson, writing from the queer old riverside inn, "The Hanbury Arms," in September, 1856. There have been some changes in what the natives call "Kerleen" since then, but its Arthurian tradition has not grown less.

CHAPTER V

FROM THE USK TO THE TAFF—THE WENTLOOG LEVEL—RHYMNEY—FREEMAN THE HISTORIAN—AN OLD ROMANCE ROAD AND A PAGE FROM THE "MABINOGION"

THE Severn Sea Flats between Newport and Cardiff make a no-man's land, a neglected district, commonly travelled only by plain folk, hawkers, bakers, and the like, who have business to do. At points it will remind you, if you know the east coast, of Canvey Island or parts of Mersea. The way to take it is to expect a melancholy region; and then the "rhines" and reedy fields and long, monotonous roads will offer entertainment. A farmstead once a priory, a neglected old house with a history, a whitewashed cottage between the last field and the sea, which was once drowned out in the great flood, or a flood-mark on a church wall, stir the conjectural wits of the traveller. The sea-walls, maintained at much cost to the farmers, show the risk of the Severn Sea's yet recapturing Wentloog. This was why castles were few along this extent of coast.

The old lordship of Wentloog stretched from the Usk to the Rhymney, and from the Severn to a boundary-line drawn from Llantarnam to Risca and Michaelston-y-Fedw. No less than seventeen manors were parcelled out of it.

Cox mentions in the last of these—that is, in the level of Mendalgyf—one of the several Green Castles that exist in South Wales: Castell Glas, on the left bank of the Ebwy, near the confluence with the Usk. This is the same "seat" that Churchyard describes:—

> "A goodly seate, a tower, a princely pyle
> Built as a watch or saftie for the soil
> By river stands, from Neawport not three myle."

Now the huge enginery of the docks, far higher than any old castle, starts up formidably in the scene. Some two miles west of Green Castle lies St. Bride Wentloog, and the road thence runs a flat two miles further to Peterstone, whose Welsh name is Llanbad, short for Llanbedr, the church of Pedr or Peter.

The famous flood-mark at St. Bride's makes you realise how amphibious life used to be in these marshy levels. Their most tragic tale is the "Great Sea Flood" of 1606, chronicled in the Harleian Miscellany. It befell on Tuesday, the 20th of January, and most idiomatically the miscellanist describes it:—

> "For, about nine of the clock in the morning, the same being most fayrely and brightly spred, many of the inhabitants of those countreys prepared themselves to their affayres, then they might see and perceive afar off as it were in the element huge and mighty hilles of water tombling one over another in such sort as if the greatest mountains in the world had overwhelmed the low villages and marshy grounds. Sometimes it dazzled many of the spectators that they imagined it had bin some fogge or miste coming with great swiftness towards them *and with such a smoke as if mountains were all on fire*, and to the view of some it seemed as if myllions of thousands of arrows had been shot forthe all at one time.

"So violent and swifte were the outrageous waves, that in less than five hours space most part of those Countreys (especially the places that laye lowe) were all overflown, and many hundreds of people, both men and women and children, were there quite devoured by those outrageous waters; nay, more, the farmers and husbandmen and shepheardes might behold their goodly flockes swimming upon the waters dead."

Many kinds of marsh and water-birds, large and small, are seen in the Wentloog Level, including herons, grebe, and red divers. In hard winters (like that of 1890–1891) the bittern and goosander reappear. But the wild swans and wild geese that haunted the marshes in large flocks ere they were drained are pretty well all gone.

Originally the Rhymney River was called Elarch after these swans, according to Coxe; and he speaks of a tradition that the songs of these swans could be heard even in London. It is another legend of the solitude crying to the town. You may realise it even to-day by spending an evening at ebb-tide on the coast anywhere near Peterston, and hearing the waders and waterchicks whistle plaintively across the tidal flats. By association it is a mournful sound, suggesting the birds bewitched that were once children of men, that still have human voices: the birds of Rhianon, the children of Ler. The Celtic swan legends reach their superlative with the going of Ler to Lake Darva, where he is told that his children have been drowned.

There he saw four swans near the lake-side, and heard them talking like children together. When they saw him, they came out of the water, and looked sorrowfully at him with their

black eyes and snake-like heads. They told him they were bewitched by their step-mother Seife, and begged him to break the spell. But it was not till the third stage of their existence, hundreds of years afterwards, when they were in the island of Glora, that the spell was broken. They had a friend there, the Lonely Crane of Inniskea; and there St. Caernhoc came with the new faith and they were baptized.

Before we go on to Cardiff, we ought to stop at St. Mellon's, if only because the historian E. A. Freeman for some years resided in the parish, at Lanrhymney Hall, using it as a working-centre from which to explore and map out locally the history and mediæval antiquity of South Wales. Many delightfully drawn small sketches of churches and towers and other old buildings from his sketch-books may be seen in the volumes of the Cambrian Archæological Society, for which he laboured tirelessly. Of his house, Lanrumney or Llanrhymney, he tells us that it was once attached to Keynsham Abbey in Somersetshire.

"Parts of the walls are of a thickness which may be of any age, but the earliest architectural features—for which however the inquirer must do me the honour of a visit inside—are of the time of Elizabeth. We have, however, little to boast of beyond a respectable ceiling in the ground-floor,—and a fine chimney piece upstairs. The latter bears date 1587, and is adorned with an elaborate shield of arms, in which, being no great herald, I thought I recognised all the kingdoms of the earth, at any rate France, Castile, and Scotland; but I have since heard that they all represent different bearings of the family of Morgan, a branch of whom held the property as late as the eighteenth century, since which it has passed through various hands."

He rejoiced unfeignedly in the Church of St. Mellon's, and gave it among all the churches he had seen in the south-western corner of Monmouthshire, forming the Deanery of Newport, the first place :—

"I mean of course," he adds, "after St. Woolos. There are some others in its own neighbourhood which contain finer work, but it certainly surpasses all in general dignity. It is perhaps less strictly designed than some others after a special Monmouthshire type, but it exhibits the general South Welsh type on a considerable scale, and with extreme variety and picturesqueness of outline. In fact, like Llandeilo Bertholey in a distant part of the country, its outline would rather have suggested Pembrokeshire as its locality than any other part of Wales or of Britain. The church is large for a Welsh parish church, being about a hundred feet long. Indeed most of the churches immediately round it are of considerable size. Several would, I imagine, exceed St. Mellon's in mere length, though I fancy the latter covers altogether the greatest amount of ground. St. Mellon's consists of a long and broad nave, to which is attached a disproportionately short and narrow chancel. This chancel too has a totally different radius from that of the nave, the south walls of the two coinciding, from which it follows that their north walls are very far from doing so. Again attached to the chancel, is a sort of transeptal chapel running north. The result is that the chancel and this chapel are entered from the nave by two arches, side by side, divided by a pillar; the southern arch, which leads into the real chancel, is, of course, very much the larger of the two. The arrangement is, as far as I am aware, unique; and the effect is singular—far more singular, I may add, than beautiful. The peculiarity lies in the lopsided appearance of the chancel thus set on one side the nave, and in the two unequal arches, side by side. A nave so broad as to take in both the choir and its aisles, and to open into them by a large central arch and a smaller one on each side, is a perfectly intelligible

arrangement, and one which would be far from unique in the South of France. At Orthez, for instance, in the Low Pyrenees, it occurs on a large scale. There are also, I believe, some similar English examples. But I have not seen or heard of any example, British or Continental, rivalling the special eccentricity of St. Mellon's. The first feeling suggested is that a north arcade has been destroyed, which certainly has not been the case since the erection of the present church. The ground-plan has clearly not been altered since the fourteenth century."

Freeman had Welsh servants at Lanrhymney, and, unlike some Welsh parents, was pleased that his children should pick up some words of the old tongue. Long before you cross the western boundary-line of Monmouthshire you are pretty sure, if you keep your ears open, of hearing it spoken. The particular dialect of Gwent is called after it—"y Wenhwyseg," and it is different enough in many of its idioms and pronunciations from the Welsh of the north and west. You may suppose that this is because Welsh in Monmouthshire is dying out. Not at all. Up in the valleys, like the poet Islwyn's, at Sirhowy (where I remember his sister, a farmer's wife, speaking it with a most attractive and pure accent) and in all the western stretches it holds its own; and though Caerleon has no Welsh, Newport town prides itself upon it, and has a patriotic society and a devoted publisher of Welsh books in Mr. Southall, an Englishman who has learnt the tongue. The small colloquial changes are many and easily detected. Take the Welsh for 'I am,'—'Ydwyf' in the book, 'Otw' in Gwentian speech, which points to a tendency all through to turn 'd' into 't.' Thus a fox, 'cadno'

becomes 'catno,' which led a bold hunting-man once to declare that Welsh rustics called foxes wild cats. Another change comes of softening the 'a': a Welsh boy in Gwent speaks of a father, 'Tâd,' as 'teâd.' Then the 'h' is often shaky, and it seems only in Gwent the English vulgarism of 'awfully' is accepted slang as in the phrase—'da afnatw!' ('awfully good!'). In his capital little word-book for the district the Rev. John Griffith gives many other local differences, as the innocent expletive, 'neno dyn' for 'yn yr enw dyn'—'in the name of man. However, it is by no means here only that the initial 'y' is dropped for convenience in ordinary talk.

I have forgotten in the account of this transformed countryside the claims of Cefn Mabley, so called after Mable, daughter of Fitzhamon. This is indeed a superb old house to make a man covetous who loves the past as Freeman did. There are perhaps twenty seats in this south country that one could willingly hold for one's own, and be able to have early associations with; and Cefn Mabley not least among them. Here lived in the time of the Civil War Sir Nicholas Kemeys, a soldier made of indomitable stuff, who held Chepstow Castle for the King and died rather than surrender it. A descendant of his, Colonel Kemeys-Tynte, has published some tales of the old house, which help to conjure it up, as such mirrors may do, with its soldiers' gallery, ball-room and great table long as the oak-tree that went to make it.

Well above Cefn Mabley stands Ruperra, another old seat connected with the Morgan family. The wooded lawns around it were, in

July, 1645, stirred by the arrival of King Charles the First as the guest of Sir Philip Morgan. Ruperra is, with some show of tradition at least, claimed for an Inigo Jones house. It was designed on large lines, with a commanding relation to its spacious site. An entry in Richard Symonds' Diary of the King's stay in Wales after Naseby runs:—

"*Sunday, July* 27, 1645.—His Matie lay at Ruperrie, a faire seate of Mr. Morgan."

A WEST MONMOUTHSHIRE COTTAGE.

This was the time of the King's disheartening negotiations with the "Peaceable Army." Next day he went on to Cardiff, but returned to Sir Philip Morgan's roof and made it his headquarters for a day or two longer. While there ill-news continued to arrive, and he heard of the burning of Abergavenny Castle—or the habitable part of it. Intrigues were gathering head against him

on every side in South Wales, and the squires were becoming more and more disaffected. The Rhymney River makes a true Glamorgan curve as it circles to the north of Ruperra. It flows on then, serving as the boundary for the two shires for over twenty miles of its course to its namesake village, and reaches the sea at one end of the sea-flat whose other end is now shaped and transformed into the Bute Docks—the marsh made into a huge geometrically planned harbour.

Approaching Cardiff from the east—and if by one of the higher roads all the better!—you are bound to be set thinking of Geraint and the way he took thither from Caerleon. The description of the road and his arrival in the town is one of the best contrived things, full as it is of the sense of greater adventure to come, which is to be had in all wayfaring literature. You realise the Cardiff of the *Mabinogion* the better for reading it again in that princely old story-book. Let us relate the end of the journey to the page for the sake of the sheer gust of romance it brings with it: it ends for that night, you remember, in the upper chamber of the ruined hall of the dispossessed, hoary-headed lord, Enid's father, where Geraint first spies the destined maid, Enid. There sits the ancient, worn-out dame in tattered, worn-out satin, the wreck of beauty; and beside her Enid, in her much-worn vest—"beginning to be worn out." It is a piece of real history that follows, showing what went on in many a castle in the new Normandy of South Wales.

CHAPTER VI

OLD AND NEW CARDIFF—THE SEAPORT, THE CITY AND THE CASTLE—A RARE CASTLE-BREAKER—THE "CUSTOMERS" AND THE SMUGGLERS

ONE autumn morning, bound for Cardiff, we sailed out from Uphill Bay on the Somerset side, with Brean Down on our left, and looked westward through the morning haze that lay along the Welsh coast opposite. A glimpse of Barry Island ought to have been caught presently, almost on a line with the lighthouse on Flatholme, as our boat's head swerved; but we were not sure of it. However, we knew that within the curved bay behind Coldknap Point the tide washed over the vanished Castle of Porthkerry; and the thought of St. Ceri and of Penarth, to which our course was set, were quite enough to start the spirit of the old sea-tales which Somerset and South Wales shared. There are one or two vestiges of these in Malory, which show how Cardiff counted in the wild geography of those tales. Most notable is the embarking of Launcelot:—

"And wholly an hundred knights departed with Sir Launcelot at once, and made their avows they would never leave him for weal nor for woe. And so they shipped at Cardiff, and sailed unto Benwick; some men call it Bayonne, and some men call it Beaume, where the wine of Beaume is."

Following hot upon Launcelot's heels came the King himself, who made ready a great host to pass over the sea; and he too shipped at Cardiff. Not only that. It was there he took the fatal step of making Mordred "chief ruler" during his war in France, and put Queen Gwenever under the traitor's charge, thus hastening on the doom of the realm.

How inevitably it recalls the Welsh legend of the Norman settlement in Glamorgan, as told in the country and in the famous old history-book by Rice Merrick which is its testament. When you have allowed for the shuffling of names and places and the telling and retelling of this particular episode, you begin to see how it was King Arthur went through so many transmogrifications —as from a British chief into a Roman Emperor, or from a Roman into a Welsh prince. The next thing was to Normanise him, and relate him to Cardiff, the Normal citadel. Unlike most Welsh castles, Cardiff has the sprucer military air of one that is used, and lived in, and kept up in state. In the midst of modern Cardiff it looks modern, and seems to forget the old town which clustered around its walls, and took name and fame from the citadel on the Taff River. The *Caer* in the name of *Car*diff comes from the Castle, and the meaning of the "diff" or "dydd" is hardly doubtful. The best of local guides gives fourteen variations in the spelling of the name, including Kardi, Cardivia, Caer Dyf, Kerdiff and Cairtaphe. The last mentioned is Leland's reading of Cardiff, and it may encourage you to arrive at the decisive variant—Caerdaff, the Castle of Taff, just as Llandaff was the Church of Taff.

But, standing by Cardiff Castle, do not be

beguiled by its newer aspect into forgetting the secrets that have dropped into its dust. Before there was a Norman castle there was a Welsh one, and before the Welsh castle there was a Roman, and little doubt but that before the Roman there was a British caer. Aulus Didius was the first Roman to plant the eagle securely at the mouth of the Taff; but he was not by any means the true conqueror of the Silures. Ostorius, tired, doffed his conqueror's shoes; and Didius succeeding him, only put them on. So some generals win with the victories of others. However that may be, a segment of the Roman wall has been unearthed in its massive entirety on the banks of the Taff, and it is to be seen if you walk straight across the Castle grounds from the entrance. Then, if it is summer, and the trees are in leaf, you have left the modern world and the ambitious city behind, and are in the time and place of Duke Robert, or you are a contemporary, if you please, of Aulus and his sentinels. There are not many such examples of Roman masonry to be had anywhere. The wall at this point is some thirteen feet high and seven feet thick at half its height; many of the stones are larger than those usually found in Roman mason-work, whose size was strictly adapted to the capacity of the British shoulders that had to bear them.

One turns here, in a moment, from the Roman to the Norman caer. It is the unique effect of this Castle to mark the seven ages of Wales in its stones.

Cardiff Castle was the fighting base of the Norman conquerors of South Wales. As we said before, the story of Fitzhamon and his twelve

knights has both stolen things from and lent them to romance; and the traffic their names recall between Wales and Normandy explains something of the traffic in the Arthurian tales that went on betwixt the countries across the Channel. The figure of Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy, who spent some twenty-five years in Robert's Tower, and died in 1134, starts up, a burly shadow, out of the shades. He was a lover of minstrelsy while he lived, and took a wise interest in the poetry of his enforced country, and learned enough of the Welsh tongue to write in it. Yes, he wrote a Welsh poem, addressed, as Penarth might have reminded us, to a distant oak that he saw from his prison window on the Head there. Somewhat thus it runs:—

"Oak that grows on the battle-rood;
After battle, after blood;—
Alas, for the wine that fed the feud!

Oak that grows upon the green,
Where the red blood-drip has been!
Alas, for him that hate has seen!

Oak that watches from the bluff
The Severn Sea,—blow fair, blow rough!
Alas, for the old, not old enough!"

There are more verses, and unluckily for Count Robert's fame as a Welsh poet, they are very like some older ones addressed to a still older tree. But there is the genuine echo of his predicament in them, and they help to establish his place as a sympathetic merchant dealing in Cardiff's mediæval literary market, which received legends and other Welsh produce—not being at all averse to stolen goods—and stamped them with a French

name for the French market. It reminds me that some twenty-five years ago I once drove from Court Henri to a farm on the B—— uplands, where they made a most deliciously flavoured creamy cheese. When I asked the farmer what he did with such a valuable commodity he told me it was sent to London, stamped with a Swiss mark, and retailed in Soho and the French mart at a high price.

One is liable to get confused between Duke Robert of Normandy and Earl Robert of Gloucester, in whose charge he was. The Earl, known also as Robert of Caen, was himself a lover of poetry and learning, and had his Welsh sympathies; and in the Castle here, or another gallery, hangs a picture of him, with Geoffrey of Monmouth, Caradoc of Llancarvan, and Walter Map gathered about him. Duke Robert's Tower, as it is now, has been much altered and added to. The late Lord Bute tells us that when Pope Calixtus II. met Henry I. at Givors, he remonstrated with the King upon his treatment of his brother. "Henry replied that 'as for his brother, he had not caused him to be bound in fetters like a captive enemy, but, treating him like a noble pilgrim worn out with long sufferings, had placed him in a Royal Castle, and supplied his table and wardrobe with all kinds of luxuries and delicacies in great abundance. In 1134 Robert died at Cardiff, and is stated to have been carried to Gloucester, and buried with great honours in the pavement of the church before the altar."

The Castle is still haunted by the figure of Duke Robert, even while other ghosts are forgotten. He may be sketched as he was when he had grown stout from want of exercise. "Stout and indolent,

pedantic, and self-important," one writer calls him. Indolent and weak-willed, he probably was. The popular account of his end is like a moving passage adapted from an old play :—

"During his imprisonment, it happened that Henry his brother, and then kinge, had brought him, upon a feast daye, in the morninge, a scarlet garment to putt on, with a cape for the head, as the manor then was, which, as he essayed, he found it too straighte in the cape, insomuche that he brake a stitche or twoe in the seame, and, castinge it aside, he bad his gentleman give it to his brother Robert, for his head (quoth he) is less than myne. The garment was brought him, and when he sawe it a little torne, he demanded how it happened that it was not sewed ; the gentleman told the trouthe, which, as he understode, he fell into a great melancholy, sayinge, 'And dothe my brother make me his bedeman, in that he sendethe me his cast clothes ? Then have I lyved too longe ! ' and, refusing all sustenance, he died."

It is the Banqueting Hall, a stately apartment wainscoted in walnut, which is frescoed with the story of the royal prisoner, Duke Robert. The Entrance Hall is connected with the Banqueting Hall by the grand staircase, and an octagonal staircase connects the latter chamber with the Library and the Chapel. The Chapel is, I suppose, the most gorgeous religious interior to be seen in Wales. Painted marble walls and ceilings, enamelled shields, glowing pictures, and an altar representing the tomb of the Saviour, give the building an excess of splendour.

The castellan, or as he is called in Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, the Captain of Cardiff, was only a casual apparition in Arthurian romance; but the shadow of the Castle and its history and traditions slants, and extends its length and exag-

Photo by] [*Williams & Curnuck, Newport, Mon.*

AT CARDIFF DOCKS.

gerated proportions through many an Arthurian page.

Cardiff Castle, as you now see it, is the masterpiece of the late Marquess of Bute, who died in 1900. Mr. Burges, a great designer, was the architect to whom the alterations and restorations were entrusted; and to him we owe the ornate Clock Tower, the restored curtain wall, and other changes, including the clearing away in advance of the old walls and houses which blocked the view. The panels on either side of the clock-face are adorned by statues of Mars and Sol and Jupiter, with the signs of the Zodiac under their feet; the lead roof is garnished with strange stars. The Clock Tower would make in itself a desirable mansion for a Welsh poet of degrees, or an historiographer. The summer smoking-room comes at the top of all, with a gallery and dome whose panels again display starry decorations, while the secrets of the Zodiac appear in the painted tiles between the windows, and a dado of red marble completes a scheme of colour that is half fantastic. The lower, or winter, smoking-room is even more gorgeous; and its painted and vaulted ceiling, its painted walls, its painted windows, might rather appear fitted to indulge the dreams of an opium-smoker than humour the plain tobacco-pipe. Sun and stars, Thor and Woden, the days of the week, and the four seasons of the year are figured there in splendour; and the wood-carving is the work of a fine artist, the late Thomas John, father of Mr. Goscombe John, A.R.A., the Welsh sculptor.

Every Welsh Norman castle had its castle-breaker. As one walks the green close or the high battlements of Cardiff one is haunted by the form of Ivor Bach, Ivor the Little, who, little as he was,

outdid all other feats of the kind. Only a Dumas could do justice to this great-little creature. A sort of Dumas we had, a fighting cleric and an intermittent romancer, in Gerald de Barri, who did write an account of Ivor's capping adventure. But he wrote it in earnest, for his own people held castles, and he felt the two currents, Welsh and Norman, at strife in his own blood, and realised that castle-breaking was a very serious business.

Reading this Ivor episode, you breathe that finer element which often gives Welsh history an air not quite real, an air of the unconditioned; for here was an all but incredible adventure carried through by a real knight for whom restraints did not count, who treated castle walls and their garrisons and castellans as lightly as Kai treated the Castle of Gwrnach the giant in the story of Olwen.

It happened, Gerald de Barri tells us, that William, Earl of Gloucester, who besides Cardiff Castle held all Morganwg—that is, the old land of Glamorgan—quarrelled with this Ivor—"a man of small stature but great courage." Ivor owned, "Welsh fashion, a large tract of the wooded and the wild hill-country; and this the Earl was minded to take from him. Now at that time the Castle of Caerdyff was walled by high walls, kept by 120 men-at-arms, a fine body of archers, and a strong watch. Yet, defying them all, Ivor scaled the walls at dead of night, seized the Earl and Countess and their only son, carried them off, and did not let them go again till he got back everything that had been taken from him—ay, and a pretty large slice of land beside."

Ivor's strong-house was in a notch of the hill, probably on a site a little above Lord Bute's reno-

vated Castell Coch, which again suggests the Red Castle of many tales. But the capitol of all these castles, Gerald's "Caerdyff" or "Kaerdiva," had its revenge on Ivor's stock. In that old budget of gossip's history, Rice Merrick's *Booke of Glamorganshire's Antiquities*, already quoted in this chapter, you may read that the unfortunate grandchildren of Griffith ab Ivor, who married a Clare, had their eyes put out and were starved to death here by Sir Richard de Clare, their kinsman. Only one escaped, who was then a babe in his nurse's arms. "Of whom God," says Rice Merrick, "multiplied a great people." A remarkable old Welsh family, indeed, sprang from Howel's loins.

When Cardiff's mediæval romance-episodes were over, a hearty era of buccaneering romance set in. Then the Knight who was no knight at all in the Arthurian sense—that John Knight who dubbed himself King of Lundy, and who was tyrant of Barry Isle—blackmailed the vessels bound for Cardiff and Bristowe, and Porlock and Bridgewater, and hid French wines and foreign tobacco in the Barry sandhills, and terrorised the Cardiff Custom House with an armed brig.

You must turn to the second volume of the *Cardiff Records* and look up the Custom House memoranda for the years 1784 and 1787, if you would read of the doings of Knight and his smugglers, said to be at times sixty or seventy strong.

On November 18, 1784, the local "Customers" report to the London Custom House: "It's with great Truth we assure you that the People here are in such dread of Knight and his Gang, that we found a difficulty in finding People to Work for us." In 1787 we hear of the Preventives having driven "that notorious Smugler Knight from the

Island of Barry." It seems that he had transferred the base of his operations from Barry to Lundy. Thereupon, no doubt, the price of tobacco went up in the Cardiff district; small shops were not so mysteriously replenished and fewer pipes exhaled.

You get but a passing glimpse of Steepholme, where one of the early hermits, a contemporary of Arthur, had his cell, as you cross the Severn Sea to Cardiff. But you can spy it from Penarth, and a white sail dipping from a small craft to the south-west of it may recall to you that Arthur had a ship of his own, called *Prydwen*—"White-Shape." We may cross the track of this vessel again if we follow the great boar-hunt of the "Twrch Trwyth." But we must leave the sea-track of the old legends now, and with it this new great seaport which the water outlet and the coal-field together have conspired to make a wonder of the world. The immensity of the new life of the Welsh capital drives the old time out of one's mind altogether. The city is only half complete as yet; streets and buildings splendid and mean jostle each other in its midst; but everywhere it impresses you as alive, ambitious and potential. It will be one of the great battle-fields between Capital and Labour in the coming struggle of the twentieth century. It has a superb castle with a great tradition and a pedigree older than Norman. It is building its University and its civic halls; and will yet, I believe, build its Parliament House. In the Cathays Park is the natural site of great buildings; but it is, because of the loose river-gravel, a very difficult one to engineer. Still the old Castle was built on the brink of the Taff too, and though the rock bottom there gave a better foundation, it must have needed some care to plan the site.

CHAPTER VII

"BRO MORGANWG," OR "THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN"—THE CASTLE COUNTRY—DINAS POWYS AND THE TALE OF THE TWELVE KNIGHTS

"My men, in helm and jesseraunt,
That hurled the ladder from the wall
And watched it fall;
My towers that heard the trumpet taunt—
What dust has closed your long account?"

BEFORE we follow the coast-line west of Cardiff we ought to make a detour to visit some of the castles that carried the great military chain across the sea-levels and low country of Glamorgan.

The tale of the Twelve Knights with many mingled associations of Arthur and Charlemagne, and its confused picture of many towers and battlements of castles impossibly crowded together as in the red, blue, and gold design of some old illuminated script, rise in the scene as one turns west to the rich district of "Bro Morganwg." They revive in the delightful old *Booke of Glamorganshire's Antiquities*, written by Rice Merrick in 1578, in which we view the coming of the Normans and the Twelve Knights of Fitzhamon through a pleasant haze of real history. From him, too, we

get the best idea that is to be had anywhere of the natural advantages the Vale of Glamorgan offered the castle-builder. Rice Merrick lived at Cottrell, and owned part of the manor of St. Nicholas, and he was Clerk of the Peace for the county. In writing his book he drew upon a Welsh MS. called *Cutta Kyvarrwydd*, dated about 1445, and his history has the singular merit that it has the air of matter-of-fact and is yet steeped in romance.

The "Conquest of Glamorgan," as Merrick relates its story, is indeed what may be called "Folk-tale History." We learn from it first how comfortably seated was the Welsh prince who was to be thrown out—a detail that adds point to the tale of dispossession. This prince, Iestin, had "two principall houses or habitacons—Cardiff and Dynaspowys," the last so called in honour of his first wife, Denys, who came from Powys-land. Then Merrick defines the "Vale of Glamorgan" and the hill-country above it in his expressive way. Speaking of "Bro Morganwg," usually Englished as the Vale of Glamorgan, "Bro," he writes, "which is as much to say as the lowe country," or "the country in the Vale, extendeth from East to West about 24 miles; and in bredth from the Severn Sea on the south side to the foot of the Hills, 7 miles less or more." Now here was the stormy cradle of the Welsh-Norman tradition. Again, "This Bro—being the body of Glamorgan, was divided into two by the Thaw, and then, by the highway—termed the Portway—from Cardiff to the western townes."

Such a region is nothing without its forest. "In the west part was a great fforrest called the fforrest of Morgan"—the eastern confines, let us interpolate, of Morgan le Fay's country. Then Merrick

turns to the up-country, or "Blainey." "Blayne," he says, "in English we call Montaines—3 times double as much and more as the low country," and divided by almost a continual ridge of hills. And more particularly it is the "Blaineu," or upland district, that breeds heroes. For "as this soyle," compared with "the lowe country," is but barren, yet in nourishing and bringing upp tall, mighty and active men, it always excelled the other." And those who by long experience have governed both regions, he says, "prescribed this principle that the Glamorgan lowlander required a different treatment to the highland. "This to be wonne by gentlenes, the other [the highlander] kept under with feare."

One mightily significant thing in the Glamorgan romance of the coming of the Normans, as Rice ap Merrick tells it, is that the quarrel between "Iestin vap Gurgan and Rhys ap Tewdwr" is due first of all to the Bayrdd ("Beirdd"), or bards. Rhys's "beirdd," after a visit to Iestin, tell Rhys that Deheubarth and Morganwg want only one completing detail—a meet match and mate for him. Now this might have been "had he only had Iestin's wife, whereby," says Rice Merrick, "Rhys was soon kindled with Venus' dart." Here is a perfect romance opening. In his ardour, Rhys arranges a high feast at Neath, "with a great trayne of Gentlemen and women." It is but natural that war should follow. And then it is that Iestin appeals for aid outside the Welsh borders, and procures Fitzhamon, who brings an army ranged under twelve knights—"valiant men well practiced in the feates of Chevallry." In the issue, Rhys is overthrown and slain; and it is not long ere the Normans take occasion to

kill Iestin, who has not kept faith "on Inon's recall."

But the "Bro" is still the charm that acts upon those superb land-thieves, the Normans. In passing through Glamorgan, says Merrick—

"the plesant (nature) of the soyle, which abounded with wyde ffeildes—pastures, deep Moores, sweete Meadowes, goodly Rivers, wholsome Springs, great shadowing woodes—soe pleased and delighted the eyes of Sir Robert Fittshamon and his 'complices, that they coveted the plant themselves and to make Seates for them and their posterity therein, according to the Poet,

"'ffor now that Soyle contents mee more
Than all my Country vayn.'"

He tells, too, how on their fatal recall, when they were leaving this land of promise, "Einon overtook them at Pwll Myryg about a mile distant by West Chepstowe." But prior to this the promised reward, or "Sallary," was paid at "Golden Mile," which is between Cowbridge and Ewenny.

This is the list of the twelve knights, whose names are redolent of romance——

1. Sir Wm. de Londres (Ogmore).
2. Sir Rich. de Granvilla (Neath).
3. Sir Pagan, alias Payn Turbervile (Coyty).
4. Sir Robt. of Sainct Quintin (Llanblethyan).
5. Sir Rich. Seward (Talavan—Seward's Land).
6. Sir Gilbert Humfreyvyle (Penmarck).
7. Sir Raynould de Sully (Sully).
8. Sir Roger Berkrols (East Orchard).
9. Sir Peter le Soore (St. Ffagan's and Peterson).
10. Sir John Flemynge (Wenvoe, Lamays, Flemingston).
11. Sir Olliver St. John (Foonmoonn).
12. Sir Wm. le Esterlinge (St. Donette's).

Of the castles whose names we may recognise in

those that are bracketed after the twelve knights' names, several lie within easy hail of Cardiff. St. Fagan's, now Lord Windsor's seat, is only three miles to the north-west; Fonmon is about ten miles south-west: Wenvoe, six miles south-west; and Sully on the coast about two leagues south, near Sully Island (where was an older Danish sea-castle or fort).

But, before any, in order of time and of the great Glamorgan legend, as Rice Merrick paints it, we ought to turn to Dinas Powys—the seat of Iestin and Denys, his wife.

Dinas Powys lies in that region of pretty country which, being within easy distance of Cardiff and Penarth, is being gradually overbuilt and spoilt. Dinas Powys, approached from the Cadoxton road, and seen above its green cwm, makes an effect that one does not soon forget. The interior of the Castle is used now as a garden by its owner, and castle-hunters are not encouraged to invade it; but the approach from the highway below is alluring. A strategic view can be had of its walls from the slope of the dingle, near Dinas Farm, and then the ancient stones and strength of the place are plainly seen. Posted there, on its limestone base, it perfectly commands the cwm (through which, no doubt, ran one of the Welsh green roads that threaded the district). Thus it served as a key to a dangerous door. The next castle to Dinas Powys, on the west, is Wenvoe; and Wenvoe was within easy call of the fighting monks of Llancarvan. Beili Castle, on the north of Dinas Powys, and Sully and Barry on the south, tell us, for the twentieth time, how ringed about with fortresses and strong-houses was the whole castlery of Cardiff.

Dinas Powys tradition, further complicating Rice Merrick's and other mixed tales about Iestyn ap Gwrgant, tells how (as a wedding present for his young wife, Denys, a Powys princess) he built this Castle before the Normans came by his disastrous invitation; and how, in spite of their coming, his surviving five sons, born and bred in this Castle, founded five great old families, all bearing the same arms. Now, the arms of Iestyn are "gules, three chevronels in pale, argent." If you are anything of a pedigree man, you will see the importance of this reminder. As for Iestyn, you will remember how, by the common tradition, he died no farther away than "Mynydd Bychan," or the Heath, as it is now called. So says one story. Another swears he died at Llangennys Monastery, having, like Llywarch Hen, survived all his sons. But one thing has still to be said about Iestyn's wife, Denys: the chroniclers declare she gave her name, as would be very natural, to the Castle, which would become Denys Powys. Mr. Thomas Morgan, a good local authority, in his *Glamorganshire Place Names*, appears to accept this notion. But one cannot help suspecting that Dinas Powys was a British camp before Iestyn touched the site, and that there was a "dinas," or old British habitation, here for centuries before Denys came from Powys.

It would be hard to find a countryside richer than the Vale of Glamorgan in the half-buried débris of real history, tradition, and superstition, dreadful and beautiful. Earliest of all, there lives an echo of Druid terror about the standing stones. What but a maenhir would go down and dip in the sea on Christmas night? There are Druid stones at Duffryn, near St. Nicholas; the field where they stand is supposed to be under a curse. Nothing

will grow there. Once a year the stones rise up, on Midsummer Eve, and whirl round three times. Any one who sleeps in the great cromlech in the Duffryn Woods on one of the three spirit nights will go raving mad. Only once a year does the sun dance; if you will only get up early enough on Easter Monday morning you will see it.

More perishable than the British superstition, the Roman seems to have faded out completely, unless, as is possible, some of the treasure-stories date from Roman days. There is often a tale of a grey lady, or a white lady, or even of a black lady, connected with the finding of a buried hoard. Sometimes they are manifestly the ghost of some memory of deadly terror, slow to die out, connected for hundreds of years with the same spot.

Phantom funerals still pass along the roads of the valley. A man riding home from market may even be so unfortunate as to see his own funeral moving in ghostly procession, and then go home to die. In Miss Marie Trevelyan's Llantwit collection of Welsh folk-lore a story is given of a phantom horse, the property of an old house in Glamorgan.

A few years ago an English wanderer in Glamorgan asked to be allowed to see the interior of the house. After spending an idle hour in the house, he left, and while going down the drive saw a white horse cantering towards him. It was a beautiful animal with a splendid white mane and long, flowing tail. The stranger stood aside and the horse passed, going straight up to the great entrance of the hall. The visitor thought no more of the horse until he sat at supper in a small country inn in the neighbourhood. There he happened to say to the innkeeper what a fine white

horse he had seen in the manor-drive—a horse that he was fairly sure was an Arab. He explained that the Arab was riderless. The landlord asked if any groom or man was with it, and the stranger said it was alone. For a moment or two the other looked troubled, and then in a whisper said, "If you please, sir, do not mention this in the village, because it is a token of death in the manor-house family." The visitor remained, it is added, in the neighbourhood long enough to hear that one of the sons of the manor-house had just died in India.

If you have a gift that way, you may chance to see not only a death-horse in the Vale of Glamorgan, but water-horses, too. There is one that rolls and plunges in the edges of the sea-waves when a storm is coming on. There is another that comes up, all dripping, out of the streams and frightens the lonely shepherd boy or girl.

There are other queer creatures you had better not meet: snakes that have underground treasures to guard, corpse-lights moving where no light should be, funeral-dogs, and cunning old reprobate grizzled foxes that have lived far too long and seen far too much. Worst of all, there are wicked, grey-headed hares that it is not at all safe to meddle with.

There are wise-men and wise-women still that it is not safe to meddle with either; a tradition of the old half-magical practice of medicine still survives. We are wise enough now to admit the existence of certain powerful individualities, natural healers gifted with magnetic force, and to believe in the sympathetic power of the will, and to recognise that those healers at times got hold of something that our hospitals cannot teach. Personally, I have known remarkable instances of cures, especially of hydrophobia, by very extraordinary

"AN UNCONSCIOUS FOLK-LORIST": VALE OF GLAMORGAN.

Drawing by Mr. T. H. Thomas.

To face p. 80.

practitioners indeed. An old country doctor said to a friend, "If ever I were bitten by a mad dog I should not dream of going to Pasteur. I should go straight to——" (mentioning a local wizard). "He cured thirty of the worst cases I have seen in this district."

A famous local habitation of these half-magical practices is the rag-well. There is one near Bridgend and another at Marcross, near Nash Point. There is nearly always the same favouring scene: the shut-in landscape, the small well, the conscious thorn-bush fluttering with rags. The ancient practice of these rag-wells has become obscured. Originally the suffering pilgrim stood within the water of the well, bathed the eyes or other affected part (Marcross is a powerful eye-well), hung the bandage used upon the thorn and dropped a small coin (in later days a pin) into the well as an offering to the presiding spirit of the place. The rag placed on the thorn was regarded as a vehicle of disease, not as an offering; the visitor to the well hoped to leave his or her ailment hanging on the thorn. The modern man, looking at the ancient bush with its fluttering or lazily hanging burden, does not know whether to be more impressed by the thorn as a nursery for microbes or as a symbol of the faith that moves mountains, operative through thousands of years.

CHAPTER VIII

PENARTH HEAD — THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE COAST—DOCKS AND A PICTURE-GALLERY—SULLY ISLAND AND THE TWO HOLMS

WESTWARD of the Taff the coast changes, and begins to show signs of a bolder sea-front befitting the wider sea that now opens before it. Penarth Head marks the difference well with its Rhætic cliff, 100 feet high, capped by Lias and based on Keuper Marl, which, by the way, is one of the finest fossil-beds in the country. A remarkable piece of rock architecture, this parti-coloured cliff with its fossil fish-scales, teeth, bones and lignite, stands up a plain witness of the changes that have passed over the coast-line of Morganwg. The Rhætic strata here are known as the "Penarth Beds," the name Murchison gave them. At the Cardiff Museum lies a good store of the fossils obtained from them by the late John Storrie, a born naturalist, formerly curator there. You see there bones and backbones of the great saurians, with perfect teeth of Ceratodus, teeth of Sargodon, along with tell-tale water-worn fragments of lignite, left by the old forests that grew here before the first stone-men had sharpened their stone-axes to cut down a tree.

Turn from these details of the slow building of

the coast by earth and sea to the newly architectured basins of the great docks. The cliff of Penarth, the Bear's Head, forms the protecting shoulder of the great dock there ensconced; and presently at Barry you will see how (as Mr. T. H. Thomas puts it) "the erosion of the softer Lias by the sea, and a small stream on either side of a mass of mountain limestone supporting Trias beds, have formed a waterway which has been trimmed into a dock larger in area than any other in England."

Penarth Head makes the approach to the watering-place below a trifle eccentric in its ups and downs. But the hilly streets, once Penarth proper is reached, give variety to the place, and increase the sensation of the bicyclist when, having laboriously surmounted the long ascent of the Windsor Road, he lets himself go on the corresponding decline seawards and arrives incontinently on the Esplanade. These are risks no Fitzhamon ever ran. For the rest, the pier, the superb seascape from the Head, the Windsor Gardens and their toy trees and other pleasures, need not be rediscovered here. Penarth Dock is another matter; it captures the imagination by its bold bid at sea economy, its water-gates that swallow the tides. The "Head" provides the Dock, as we see, a shelter by its great wind-breaking natural rampart, much as Barry Island serves Barry Docks. Nature can be a rare carpenter; and the rocky structure of the Head and the coast beyond it prove her a master-mason too.

On a clear day the view from Penarth Head, which is 207 feet above the sea, swallows up half the Bristol Channel and its coast-line. From the smoke of Bristol, seen beyond Clevedon; from Portishead to Weston, whose lights as they begin to gleam look like watch-stars at twilight from this

point, with the lighthouse on Flatholm shining a little to the south; from Brean Down over Bridgewater Bay the range is wide, but it is cut off westward from the view of the Quantocks possessed by Lavernock Point.

The new Church of St. Augustine, built in 1895, stands well on the landward slope within a stone's throw of the Head, and near by is a schoolhouse, with a coloured fresco of boys and girls at play exhibited on its front.

Penarth Dock needs an engineer to appreciate all the science expended on its construction and its adaptation to the tides of the Severn Sea. Penarth Head, as we said, serves the Dock here very much as Barry Island serves Barry Docks. Allowing for the outflow of the river Ely at Penarth, the lot of the two places is very similar. Over half a mile long, the Dock and its great basin have a water area of twenty-six acres. The width of the seagates is thirty yards, and the depth of water at the common spring tides six fathoms. Many of the largest vessels afloat, laden to their utmost capacity, have arrived at and sailed from Penarth Dock without delay and with perfect safety. The Dock gates and bridges are opened and closed by hydraulic power, and eight powerful capstans are provided at the outer and inner gates for the vessels passing in and out. The whole is leased to the Taff Vale Railway Company for a term of 999 years. What will be the state of the congeries of ports and boroughs that form the Cardiff district ten centuries hence?

The place is fortunate in having, besides its docks and the usual seaside distractions, an unexpected, delightfully appointed little picture-gallery at Turner House. It was given to Penarth by the late Mr. Pyke Thompson, who had formed

the collection originally for his own pleasure. His idea was to form a gallery mainly of British painters, which should be small, choice and complete in itself, and so finely arranged that every picture should be given wall-space and light sufficient to individualise it. The gallery is interesting to amateurs and hunters of the picturesque in South Wales because of the Welsh scenes on the walls. Among these may be noted the view of Penarth Point in the lobby, and the picture of Swansea Bay by Penry Williams. In the main gallery upstairs there are pictures of Ludlow Castle, Harlech Castle and Dryslwyn Castle by David Cox. There are two exquisite little Boningtons too in the upstairs-room, which carry us to English places: and a few well-chosen Méryon etchings to recall French art, including some in fine state of the Notre-Dame series. The gallery, small as it is, and partly because it is small, makes an unusually complete impression on the sense of the man who, tired of the villas and seaside frippery of the place, retreats within its shelter; and Penarth may well be proud of Turner House and grateful to its giver, who, wise man, stipulated as a condition of the bequest that it should be open on Sundays.

Returning to the coast, we ought to note that the Penarth Beds, including the Upper and White Lias and the Lower, or Black, Lias, provide good sport in the way of pectens and other remains. And it is not only the Lias that is well placed for fossil-hunting between Penarth and Lavernock. Along the same range of cliffs may be seen beneath the Lias at two places, nearing Lavernock, the New Red and so-called "Tea-green" Marls, whose name helps to describe them. The

Marls, red and green, may be examined, too, on Sully and Barry Islands, where the rock serves. The best hunting of all is to be had, as a local collector has told us, at *Lavernock Point* itself. There is a particular "patchy bed much worn and torn by water," made up of jasper and quartz and pebbles and nodules and other stony things, from which you may dig out bones of two kinds of Plesiosaurus, and relics of that extravagant monster Ichthyosaurus, and spines of Hybodus. These may tell you what saurians, sea-gods, and little fishes once knew Lavernock and all this corner of the Welsh coast.

As you walk round the coast from Lavernock you pass the island of Sully. Unluckily the coast walk is here and there interrupted by private grounds; and low tide does not much better the adventure, as the beach can only be followed with difficulty, the way being rough and rather unpleasant. At Sully a keen naturalist and observer, the late Dean Conybeare (Dean of Llandaff, where he lies buried), was for a long time rector. Barry Island is, we should add, still ecclesiastically a part of the parish of Sully, whose church, much restored, has an old piscina to show and three tombs on the right of the chancel to the Thomases of Llwyn Madoc. A scant fragment of the Castle of Sully is all that is now left. Sully Sound reached, the rocks must be crossed at low water if the island is to be explored. There is a pool at the westerly end; and near the last point are the remains of a Danish fort, with a burial mound to the right of it. From Swanbridge the cliffs westward can be followed toward Barry.

The Welsh name for Sully—that is, the village—is Abersili, because Nant Sili flows out to the sea

here. Sully, so declares local gossip, is an English version of "Sili," a Welsh term for trickling, or, rather, spurting and hissing, water; and there is also a Norse explanation (natural enough, seeing that there is the Danish camp to suggest it) which declares that Sully means "the ploughed island." But Sully was the name, too, of the Norman knight who settled here on Fitzhamon's allotment of Glamorganshire; so you can take your choice of the three. Swanbridge, like Swansea, may have been called after Sweyn, the great Danish sea-rover, who perished in 877.

You may think that the building of the huge docks at this corner of the Glamorgan seafront and the deepening of the sea-approaches were bound more or less to alter the old conditions of navigation. But if you talk to a seaman who intimately knows the Bristol Channel and its shoals and tides, you will find it has not quite lost its old tricks. He can tell you about the islands and covered rocks; not so much about Sully and Barry Islands perhaps, but Flatholm, Steepholm and Lundy too. Walking the foreshore, he still looks at everything from the mariner's point of view. He remembers well a coarse night on the Welsh Grounds, "thirty years ago, last March," when his vessel was all but bumped to pieces. The Welsh Grounds, it should be said, stretch roughly from about Sudbrooke Chapel to the mouth of the Usk. They are nearly all uncovered at low water after a spring tide. The south-west spit of these sands is a particularly nasty one, for the flood-tide sweeps over it into Newport deep at a great pace. At high water smaller vessels sail over the Grounds, but woe to the ship of any deeper

draught that gets on to them on a dirty night The Cardiff Grounds, again, make a long narrow shoal, which is changing all the while. When you spy Lavernock Point from the sea, you see it as a sort of elbow in the shore-line, and a white church or chapel and a farmhouse just over the brink of the bold cliff. Steepholm Island makes a break in the Channel out of proportion to its size on the chart, because of its high, steep shore east and west. The island rises at one pitch 237 feet above sea-level. It has a sly, two-and-a-half fathom shelf running out to four cables too, which has to be avoided. Flatholm lies about a league nearer the Welsh coast; it too has a light-house with red and white occulting lights. The "Wolves," which lie eight cables north-west of Flatholm, are to Cardiff vessels more dangerous than either of the Holms: they are three rocky heads, the most wolvish of which sticks a five-foot-long snout out of the water at low tide. Two buoys, black and white and red and white, mark them.

CHAPTER IX

BARRY ISLAND—PORTHKERRY AND KERI'S DAUGHTER—FONTYGARRY AND ABERTHAW

To Sully succeeds Barry Island, which you can easily reach by the Barry Railway without wandering thither viâ the coast-line and the cliffs of Lavernock and the sea-waste beyond. Barry would be very much like a second Penarth, because of its mixture of titanic docks and suburban villas, were it not for the island, once a sandy solitude and pirates' run, now in process of being tamed by the house-builder and his brick-terraces. The miles of streets and houses, scattered apparently at random on the road from Cardiff, have pushed their way now upon the island itself: Cadoxton merges itself in Barry Dock, and Barry Dock in Barry town, while the island serves all three places as a kind of sea-suburb. Once this was all a wild warren, with here and there a farm or a few cottages, and with more rabbits than men for tenantry. The rabbits one mostly sees now are those hung up by the heels at the poulterers' in Barry streets. As for the harbour, it is claimed by its engineers that it is the finest of all the big Severn Sea series. It lies under the land, well sheltered from all westerly and south-westerly winds. The breakwaters completely cover the only

points of exposure, say to the southward, with a sea range of fourteen miles, and to the south-east with a sea range of sixteen miles. The Docks thus have their entrance in a well-guarded position; a ship leaving them is in a few minutes in what sailors call "blue water," and is not exposed to the troublesome navigation which at Cardiff and Penarth is conducted for from two to three miles through an artificial channel (cut through the mud flats), which channel is nearly dry at low water. There is good anchorage ground extending from Barry Island to Sully Island, three miles to the eastward.

One of the Docks looks almost a mile long with a width proportionate—a titanic thing. It is approached by a passage closed by a caisson, and at its east end are two huge Timber Ponds with a railway alongside, so that timber can be loaded direct from the ponds into the railway wagons.

The waterway between the breakwater heads is over a hundred yards wide, and the Channel is lighted after dark by a flashing white light of the fifth order, in a trim lighthouse; the space inside the breakwaters affords shelter for pilot-boats, tugs, and small craft attendant upon the Docks. Barry is the only port in the British Channel which vessels can use freely, coming and going at any state of the tide. The great wrought-iron water-gates at the outer, and Dock, passages are moved by great hydraulic rams, strong enough to hold the gates rigid while opening and closing.

Barry Island was formerly a notorious haunt of "runners" and smugglers; and many tales could be told of the days, well over a hundred years ago, when the island was described as "the Fortress of Knight, the Notorious Smugler." Some idea of it, and of Knight and his doings, may be had from

the Cardiff Custom House papers, which Mr. Hobson Mathews ransacked for his second volume of the *Cardiff Records*. There we read how "the desperate *Ruffins* at Barry Island" had a vessel with the name *John of Combe* painted on her stern. And in 1784, on April 3rd, we hear of Thomas Knight's running successfully a cargo of wine, by persuading the tide-waiters and excisemen that it was to remain on the island, and then spiriting it away—no doubt to supply Cardiff and its customers. However, the Custom House officers made Barry Island too hot for Knight; for in 1785 he had retired to Lundy, after having been driven from Barry. His "armed brig," it is added, being no longer at hand to support the smugglers, their ill-trade has much declined. "When his armed vessel was there, he was in such Force that it was impossible to approach the Island." In 1798, we are told of a large take of brandy and port wine again on Barry Island. The smugglers found the island very well arranged for their favourite game of hide-and-seek with the excisemen. "At Barry, 'tis the same case; if they find the officer on the Island, they'll land the other side of the Harbour,' or vice versa, in which case "the officers can't get over till the tide is out, which may be 5 or 6 hours; and there is so much cover on the Iseland, and such conveniencys for hiding of goods, that an officer has but a poor chance to meet with 'em after they are landed."

But Barry was an Isle of the Saints, long before it was adopted by the Severn sea-rovers of a later day. If on reaching the island you turn up the new thoroughfare of Newell Street, leaving a few shops in a terrace and a new chapel, on the right, you soon reach, on the left, the railway and the old

walls that mark the site of St. Baruch's Chapel, now carefully preserved. All that is to be seen of it, as it lies rather below the level of the road, can be seen very well through the fence.

In Rees's *Lives of the Cambro-British Saints* we read that St. Cadoc lived in two islands, Barreu and Echni—the latter being no doubt Flat Holme; and there is a strange story of his crossing by boat between the two, with two of his disciples—one of whom was Baruc. But these two, unluckily, forgot to bring Cadoc's *Enchiridion* with them from Echni, and he sent them back, and on the second crossing they were drowned—Cadoc seeing the disaster from the high ground on Barry Isle. The body of Baruc, being recovered, was buried on the island: it may have been one of the innumerable dead interred near his chapel. The miraculous element in the tale is supplied by the catching of a salmon, to appease Cadoc's hunger after long fasting, and the finding of the lost *Enchiridion* in the fish's belly.

Gerald de Barri tells us the island was called after St. Baruch, and he was buried in "a chapel covered with ivy." The De Barris, he adds, took their name from the island—a manifest old family fiction. St. Baruch has been placed in various centuries: he belonged to the sixth. Before him we have Peiro, who was a pietist, but hardly pious: and then Samson, of Llantwit Major fame: both as residents in the religious settlement. Trenches cut in exploring St. Baruch's Chapel showed that the burials under and around it had been on an extraordinary scale. Like Bardsey, it seems to have been a holy island; and the bodies of the elect were exhumed and brought here from afar.

The one guide to Barry Island, who knew every

nook and corner of it, unearthed its fragments of antiquity and thoroughly explored its rocks and plants, was the late John Storrie, the naturalist. He loved the wild place and its wild flowers, and collected over three hundred kinds in all, and he put them all, and much more, into his knowledgeable small book about the island. Many flowers remain in spite of the Docks and the building over of the nooks where once grew the milk-vetch, the true marshmallow, the henbane, and their congeners.

There is a gently-sloping, smooth-sanded bathing beach at Barry Island, in the curve of Whitmore (or Wick More) Bay. Round the rocks of Friars Point—the point which forms the right-hand or western horn of the Bay—is the famous Pebble Beach which lined the eastern shore of Barry Harbour, as it used to be: a harbour which did not collect much shipping beyond a stray ketch or so. The "harbour" is now a blind one, ending in the embankment across which the western road to the island runs. The opposite head, to the west, across the harbour mouth, is Coldknap Point. Looking west from the Point, you have one of the drowned places of the Welsh coast within reach. For there stood once the strong tower and water-gate of Porthkerry Castle, some of whose foundation walls could still be traced at low tide a generation ago. At Coldknap Point you can see, whether the tide is in or out, the still older walls which form this part of the coast, and which are here formed of protruding buttresses, built of carboniferous limestone, above the ramparts of the Lias.

One of the most inviting sylvan roads in all Glamorganshire is that leading down to Porthkerry Park. When you have escaped on the brow of the

hill the last Barry villas, you soon pass the old farmstead of Castle Farm, with the adjacent remains of the gateway to show the fine outlook seaward of the ancient Castle of Barry. Thereaway the road bends northward, and, reaching the brink of Cwm Barry, descends the wooded slopes of Coed yr Odyn, amid a scene that might be miles from any street or town, and leagues away from the sea. The change from the suburban terraces of Barry to this unspoilt wooded cwm is sudden and delightful. And there is nothing to break the illusion on the way to Porthkerry, through the Park, until one comes to the tall viaduct of the railway under which one must pass on the way. The lower park-lands, set with fine timber in a green amphitheatre, make (or still made when I last saw them) one of the fairest woodland scenes imaginable. Leaving the Park, the road, or lane (for it is no more), climbs again the western side of the cwm, and meets another road at an old thatched homestead, with beehives in the garden and an orchard flanking the house. The road to Porthkerry Church and the sea lies then on the left; but you must not expect a seaport now at Porthkerry; for its few houses are scattered and you are apt to find yourself at last on the way to Rhoose, while still looking for an imaginary Porthkerry street and its shops.

Porthkerry was one of the old legendary harbours of South Wales and a momentous spot in the records of the Coming of the Normans. Here Fitzhamon and his men apparently landed in 1093. The curious account given of it by Rice Merrick in his *Booke of Antiquities* has been quoted in an earlier page. We might do worse than spend an afternoon here, fresh from Barry Dock, trying to reconstruct the rude sea-

fortress and old Caer of Porthkerry before the Normans' time, for one would give much to see a real Welsh port of the tenth or eleventh century. You cannot but notice at once that the wooded confines of Porthkerry and Coed yr Odyn offered a campus and mustering-place in which to form the newly landed Normans, and arrange plans for the surprise of the forces of Rhys. Porthkerry takes its name from Ceri, or St. Curig, around whose history, first as a soldier, then as a saint, some wild legends have been woven. Curig Lwyd, sometimes called Curig the Knight, figures in many Welsh traditions. Capel Curig in Snowdon and Llangurig are his best-known church-dedications in Wales, and he had several in Brittany. As for Porthkerry, the Iolo MSS. (not always the best authority) say, "St. Cirig founded Porthcirig for the benefit of the souls of sailors and as a port for them." Another document makes Ceri ab Caid its real founder. A ballad-writer has laid the scene here, and in the neighbouring Glamorgan hill and valley lands, of the nightly rides of Ceri ab Caid's daughter, who was mysterious in her flight like "Mallt y Nos," first cousin of the moth. The ballad, whatever its foundation in folk-lore, gains in reality by being read at Porthkerry and related to the hills of Morganwg.

KERI'S DAUGHTER.

I.

Alone I go a-hunting, when all their hunting's done,
To follow Keri's daughter in the footsteps of the sun.
She drowses all the day thro', she wakens with the moth;
And shakes out her black tresses from their crimson binding cloth.

Their beauty that she braided falls loose now to her knees,
As she goes to her window, and wonders at the trees.
Her eyes shine in the shadow, grown opal-like, and change
Like pools that fill with starlight when other lights grow strange.
Now on the stair, bare-footed, she stays to gird her gown,
That it may let the briers be;—and lightly she goes down.
What fate's on Keri's daughter, to wake when all is done,
And follow where the sun went but never see the sun?
What fate's on me to follow along the fields of night,
The feet of Keri's daughter, yet never cross her sight?

II.

The wind is her white brachet, to course the wood with her.
Where the oak trees are tall, and the lone stars lean near.
The oak leaves cannot keep her, her white hound draws her on:
The livelong night, they range the night, until the night is done.
I ride into the mid-wood, and wait. What fragrance clings
Upon the dreaming fernleaf, and the muffled, drowsy things.
Is that an owl upon the hill, or is it her white hound,
To tell me I must leave the wood, and follow at the sound?
But when we reach the hilltop, we hear them in the wood;
And when we turn, we turn too late, the moorland is her mood.*

The Barry Railway has a station at Rhoose, which, after the fashion of places newly visited by a railway, shows signs of growing out of a sleepy hamlet and building houses and hotels to attract the crowd. The nearest sands are at Fontygarry, and the station lies between. As one passes through the village, one catches sight of an apparent old market cross on a stone-stepped

* For the continuing stanzas, see *Lays of the Round Table*, 1905.

base; but it proves, on a nearer approach, to be the village pump. The name of Rhoose is simply the Welsh Rhôs—a marsh meadow, which figures so often in Welsh place-names. The wreckers of Rhoose were notorious in the eighteenth century, and watched the coast like hawks from Barry to Dunraven, using false lights to lure on any unlucky craft that happened to be out of its bearings. They kept up a brisk smuggling trade, too, with the coast of France. In George the Second's reign detachments of soldiers were sent secretly and landed at Barry and Aberthaw, at the request of the then Master of Fonmon, to try and take the ringleaders of the smuggling and wrecking gang.

From Rhoose it is but a short mile to Fontygarry. The farmhouse of Fontygarry, greenly embowered, is reached in a dip of the road on the right; a house where John Wesley once made a stay on his Welsh journeys.

From Fontygarry to Aberthaw is another mile and a half. Aberthaw, once a well-known little seaport, still keeps much of the good old style of the genuine Glamorgan village about it, with thatched roofs and thick-walled cottages. The river has become sanded up to an impracticable extent for shipping now, and only a few stray ketches and small vessels put into the port. Formerly it was a favourite landing-place for "run" goods.

In 1734 the Cardiff Custom House officers reported to London that "when any boats goes out to 'em" [*i.e.*, the smugglers] "the owners of 'em have always a spye on the officer; and when they find him of one side of the river at Aberthaw, they'll land what they have of the other; and

by reason there's no Boat in the Service, nor any boat on those accosts to be had for love or money, and the officer obliged to go to a bridge about two Miles round, they have time enough to secure the goods before he can get there. Nay, there is instances that they have run'd goods in the day time before the officers' face in this Manner." How horrible to contemplate!

Not far from Aberthaw is the village of St. Athan and the site of West Orchard Castle, once the scene of an extraordinary tragedy, still haunted by a sad remembering spirit. In the early summer mornings, before the dew is off the grass, a lady in white silken robes is seen to pass slowly round and round a particular spot. The reason of her appearance was a strange and tragic one.

"Many centuries ago, Sir Jasper Birkrolles married a daughter of the powerful house of De Clair, who were Lords of Glamorgan. When Sir Jasper came back from the Second Crusade enemies whispered in his ear that his wife had been unfaithful to him during his absence. Lady Birkrolles vainly protested her innocence, her husband passed a savage sentence upon her.

"In a field not far from the Castle he had a deep hole dug. There his beautiful wife was to be buried up to her neck and suffer death from slow starvation. She was not to have a crumb of bread nor a drop of water, in that hole she was to linger till she died.

"Lady Birkrolles happened to have a sister, and this daughter of De Clair's begged that she might visit her sister once a day at least. The cruel husband consented, provided that she carried neither food nor drink with her. At dawn every

day the girl visited her miserable sister. Up and down the grass she trailed her long silk dress, that the miserable prisoner might suck moisture from the wet folds. For ten days Lady Birkrolles lived on this slender refreshment. On the tenth she died. A short while after her innocence was proved, and the wretched Sir Jasper died raving mad."

It is said that as late as 1863 women who went milking in the early morning said they often saw a beautiful lady dressed in white going round and round a particular spot in the field, they could not tell why.

CHAPTER X

LLANTWIT MAJOR—ST. ILLTYD: A KNIGHT OF THE GRAIL—ST. DONAT'S

THINKING of Illtyd the Breton Knight, you reach Llantwit to-day to feel bewildered by its mixed airs of change and unchange. Modern shops stare down the streets at some mediæval inn, like the "Old White Swan"; and the latest generation is seen mounting the steps of a time-honoured building, once the old Town Hall, that became the National School. But those who go to Llantwit must not expect majestic ruins or a towering antiquity like Tintern Abbey. Its wonders are half secret, and ask more of the pilgrim than an hour's idle curiosity. Otherwise, he may go away disappointed, even when all is seen—the church, the sloping churchyard with its graves, and the adjacent half-obliterated traces of all that monastic settlement, with its corn mill, barn, dove-cot, guest-house, and prior's lodging, which once stood in the shallow vale of Odnant.

The old Town Hall was still in use as a school on my last visit. If the outer steps are ascended to the upper part of the building, the door will usually be found on the latch; but there is little to be seen within, unless it is in school hours, when the spectacle of the school children at their

tasks, and the hum of their voices, may call to mind that older school of divinity which once made Llantwit famous. Leaving the Town Hall on your left, you soon reach the church, well sunk in its hollow so as to be out of sight of the marauding Black Pagans. The brook Ogney afforded in its tiny valley just so much shelter as invited the early monks to make their abode here. As at St. David's, where the brook in the Vale of Roses offered another such hollow, the course of the small stream shows the line along which the monastic settlement and rude enclosures and wattle-huts were placed; to give way in course of time to solid stone. Church and churchyard at Llantwit are full of these reminders. The church stands deep below the road, and steps and a slant path lead to the east-end of what is called the New Church, which is now in use. As you approach it, the old crosses and ancient monuments on the slope, no longer tell of the ages of its history; they now stand within the walls. St. Illtyd's Stone, one of a series of three erected, or caused to be erected, by Samson, counts first because it is after St. Illtyd that Llantwit is called; "Llan Illtyd" having gradually been corrupted into its present form. Illtyd's church of wattle and clay stood, perhaps, where what is now known as the Old Church stands, west of the building in use. His monument was carved by Samuel, the stonecarver, who has a claim thus to be the Father of Welsh sculptors. Samson's two other memorial stones used to stand by the porch of the western church. The Celtic tracery on the finer of the two is most beautiful. The eastern building, despite its name of the New Church, may look older than the un-

cared-for Old Church; but there is little doubt that the latter name really perpetuates the site of the first church of all. Freeman's idea was that the so-called Old Church was the parish church, and the so-called New Church was attached to the monastery. The church now in use is a thirteenth-century building, with some alterations; and it has a Norman font. The frescoes in the chancel represent Mary Magdalene and the Saviour, and the Fall of Man. The "Old Church," a late fourteenth-century recast, has become a kind of mysterious sculptor's gallery. Its sermons are carved stones, among them the Cross of Howell, whose inscription appears to run: "In the name of God the Father and the Son and Holy Ghost, Howell raised this cross for the soul of his father Rhys." Howell was a Prince of Morganwg, a couple of hundred years before the Normans invaded it.

Beyond the Old Church is the ruined Lady, or Galilee, Chapel, a fifteenth-century building, and beyond that again, and on the south-west corner of the churchyard, we see the remains of a fine old fourteenth-century house, used in its latter days as a mill, it is said: and to judge by its position above the brook Ogney, built to grind corn for the monastery here, whose buildings must at one time have almost completely hemmed in the church and churchyard. Across the brook, and on the rising ground above, there is a poor fragment of a gate-house, but the great tithe-barn is gone, which fed the mill. It had a particularly good oak roof, well preserved, and was, sixty years ago, as fine an old church barn as could be seen. The Dean and Chapter of Gloucester sold the oak roof for a mere song; and the building that might have served

the community for long as an interesting old landmark went to rack and ruin. So I was told by an old standard of the place.

Save for the stones of Illtyd and Samson and other noble fragments not too easy to identify, nearly all we see at Llantwit was, it is needless to say, built long after the early days of the Celtic church. The ecclesiastical buildings grew all through the Middle Ages, when Llantwit counted as one of the chief religious centres in South Wales. Thus it continued right into Tudor times, when the town waxed in turn, as you are driven to conclude in exploring the township and adjacencies.

The village-town lies about a mile from the sea; and the last part of the way thither lies through a cwm, shut in between wild coverts and grassy banks, like a cwm far inland. You go slowly meandering through it, like a man in a dream; and if it is a calm day, you forget the sea, until, getting to its lower end, you see salt scurf and bits of seaweed on the grass. A rough rampart of earth and stone shuts off the seaward view: when you clamber over this, you find the pebbles of the beach banked high against it. If the tide is low you can get round the cliffs, which are from 70 to 90 or 100 feet high, and on to the great slabs of smooth limestone, stretched flat at your feet. Over these roll rounded stones, like rejected cannon-balls; while deep fissures and melancholy caves have eaten here and there into the limestone. There is something at once alluring and forbidding in the coast at this point. It is best to be seen with a flowing tide and a strong sou'-westerly wind; when the cannon-balls roll clanking about, mixed with wrack from lost ships.

One day, we were caught by the tide, and penned in a cove which had luckily a steep zigzag track to the cliff-top. But the tide brought up, rolling them along with it, a broken keg, some battered hampers, and two sealed tins. With the blade of a pocket-knife we pierced one of the tins, and were alarmed by a spirt of vile gas which escaped hissing. We expected it to explode; but it only contained some kind of salt fish, much decomposed. The other tin was full of rank butter.

With a strong sou'-wester and a high tide, the waves dash high up the cliffs, and the spray reaches the sea-pinks and blue corn-cockles on their tops. The cliffs are not kind to unwary lovers who venture on them at dark. Only last spring a pair went walking toward St. Donat's. At a point where the track is close to the edge the youth slipped his foot, and falling, clutched at his companion's dress to save himself. Both went over. He was fatally hurt, and died where he fell. The girl escaped with broken bones and, the tide sparing her, she was rescued next morning after a terrible night, during the first part of which she had his groans to add to her own torment.

There are sea-places, stretches, and pitches of a rocky coast, especially those where the sea is eating away the land, which affect one by a kind of indeterminate cruelty, almost malignity of aspect, seen partly in the colour, partly in the forms of the rocks. Here the stone is a cold grey, and often cruelly edged; and it breaks treacherously under the feet and hands of the climber climbing up to escape the tide, which flows up with eagerly returning waves at the September high tides when a whipping wind is behind it.

LLANTWIT MAJOR: THE COLUMBARIUM.

Drawing by Mr. T. H. Thomas.

A little way up the brook, if you follow its course by the rough footpath, skirting its banks, and cross a stile or two, you come to the road under the so-called Castle, which appears to be in effect an old mansion, not older than the reign of Henry VII. If you look back from the southern walls towards the village and the Odnant cwm, you get a sudden sense of the immense antiquity that is buried there. The house you are standing near may be 400 years old, the church 700 years old, the crosses in the churchyard 1,400 years old.

By following the winding cwm of the Odnant you can reach the sea in half an hour; but there is a quicker way. If the bank is ascended opposite the church, and across the brook, some small cottages face the rough lane that leads to the sea; and there is a stile leading into the fields within fifty yards, from which a footpath, not very clearly defined, will take you over three fields to join the cwm. Descending it, you cross the stream by stones (if the weather is dry enough) or by the footbridge, lower down.

The cwm from the junction of the Ogney and the Odnant is called Cwm Col Hugh; and the lower part of it, within the dike, has a strange aspect from the salt scum left at high tides on the grass. The meadows of Col Hugh are, in summer, the playground of crowds of holiday-seekers, who know nothing of the ancientry of Llantwit. If one climbs the steep eastern bank of the cwm, near its sea-outlet, one has *Castle Ditches* immediately on one's left. The so-called Ditches, three in number, and unusually well marked, are the triple earth-works defending a very strong coast-fort or encampment, thrown up by the Danes in the eighth or ninth century, when Sweyn was active

on this coast. From Col Hugh Point, if the tides serves (and the tide here has great "play"), a way can be found along the rocks, edged and harsh to the feet, past the Dimhole cwm and the sea-caves and broken cliffs, to *Tresilian Bay* and its cave.

Tresilian has many and strange tales connected with it. The name "Tre-sulien," the town, or place, of Sulien, is taken from that St. Sulien whom the Black Pagans killed. Tresilian Court, now occupied as a country house, was once a farm-house-inn of the old Welsh kind. It was a great smugglers' and wreckers' resort in the "good old time"; a Stevensonian romance might easily be written round it. Then, still earlier, here was the scene of the merry rites, or riots, of the "Gwyliau Mabsant" of this neighbourhood; when all the country round came in carts and on horse or afoot, and feasted not wisely but too well. And then the fair Dwynwen of Tresilian Cave beguiled the youths and maidens who came to have their fortunes told by the method you may still adopt.

The cave has, at a distance of seven or eight feet below its roof, a stone-rib, forming an arch. Lovers who wish to question Dwynwen, half sea-witch, half sea-goddess, must find a round pebble, and pitch it over this arch so that it falls clear on the other side without touching the rock, rib or ceiling. The exact formula, said to be muttered during the ceremony, I cannot trace. "Possibly," says one writer, "it was only '*Un, dau, tri*,' according to the number of attempts made; each counting as another year to be passed before marriage!" More probably a clear stone-cast meant good furtherance in the course of true love.

At high tide good swimmers have been known to swim over the arch, and return, diving under it. A boat, too, has been piloted through the opening; but you need to know the cave to risk it. From the back of the cave a small passage proceeds into the cliff, with many crevices; and local tradition has it the passage is connected with St. Donat's Castle. This is no doubt the underground-passage myth common in all rural neighbourhoods. Formerly runaway marriages took place in the cave—according to the gossips; and there is no doubt of one regular marriage at least which was celebrated in it—that of General Picton's parents. The cave used at that time to be called familiarly "St. Sulien's," as if it was a church, duly acknowledged; or some say "Reynard's Church," perhaps alluding to the fox as a fitting priest for a clandestine marriage. It has been suggested, too, that a church stood a mile away southwards, where the sea now washes, but this, too, is a natural tradition for this sea-bitten coast.

We can continue the sea-coast walk from Tresilian, with one interruption, to *St. Donat's*—St. Donat's, whose old gateway opens upon romance. What a history, and what a family! For seven hundred years the Stradlings ruled there, beginning with the first Le Esterling who received St. Donat's at the hands of the conqueror Robert Fitzhamon. Knights, adventurers, smugglers, and wreckers, their motto, "Duw a ddigon" (*God and enough*), seems to have been cynically conceived. Yet just as you have decided that here was the dwelling of a lawless race—pious, learned, and cultured Stradlings come into view. There was Sir John Stradling, who

died in 1637, a poet and a mighty scholar. Even by the time he graduated at Oxford he was "accounted a miracle for his forwardness in learning and pregnancy of parts." He passed as a typical cavalier, and wrote a poem to James I., and poems to Charles I., besides epigrams to his friends. There were other Stradlings—Sir Edwards and Sir Thomases—travellers and men of affairs, who built sea-walls at home and encouraged Welsh learning abroad. You realise here what a fine, fortunate stock it was that inherited St. Donat's, and paced its gardens devising great works, entertaining rare guests. Among the latter may be certainly counted Archbishop Usher, who fled here in 1646–1647 from Cardiff, with his daughters and others, and was roughly used on the way. His hiding-chamber was behind the picture-gallery. Another refugee, in an earlier day, was Nicolas Breakspear, who became Pope Adrian IV., the only English Pope.

The story of the last of the Stradlings, were it all unravelled, would fill a long mortal document. Born in 1712, Sir Thomas was at Oxford a fellow-student with a young man of the name of Tyrwhit. After the completion of their college career these two young men resolved to make the grand tour together. Before starting (as was afterwards shown in evidence) they each wrote a letter to the effect that if either of them should die whilst abroad, the survivor should inherit the deceased's property. After being absent some time from England, news came to St. Donat's that Stradling was dead, having been run through the body in a duel (it was said with his own friend, Tyrwhit) at Montpellier, in France, on the 27th of

September, 1738. His body was brought to St. Donat's to be buried on the 19th of March following. Several rumours were then afloat that he had come to his end unfairly, and it was much doubted that it was his body that was sent over. So his old nurse, who sat up with the coffin when it was lying in state, secretly opened it, and thrust her hand in, to feel whether all the fingers were on the left hand, as she knew that Sir Thomas had, when a child, lost one of his fingers, it having been bitten off by a donkey. She declared that the *two* hands of the body sent over were perfect, and, therefore, that the body was not the body of Sir Thomas Stradling. Hence for many years there was an expectation of his making his appearance. After more than half a century spent in litigation, during which time Tyrwhit himself died, the estates were settled by Act of Parliament, the largest portion being sold to pay the lawyers; and the only part which was allotted to the heirs of *Tyrwhit, the inordinate claimant*, was the Castle and about £1,200 a year, out of an estate which, at that time, was the Chatsworth of the period. Various claimants got small portions, but the baronetage became vested in the issue of Jane, daughter of Sir Edward Stradling, and wife of Thomas Carne of Nash; and the property in course of time was re-acquired by her descendants, the Stradling-Carnes. More recently it has passed into the hands of another old Welsh family.

The Castle itself is still a live castle; and although a little over-restored, it is as gracious an abode for a man of estate as he could wish. It has Roman Emperors (who look rather out of place), and a fountain, in its court. It has a hall

with a great hearth, and a music-gallery above; and it has countless staircases, of stone or old oak, with passages and unexpected corridors; and casements with a command now of the little green ravine, now of the gardens and seaward lawns; altogether a covetable great house for the romantical soul to covet.

One distinguished modern writer, "Vernon Lee," has been so far attracted by its implicit wildness as to give us a small, highly-coloured romance written round St. Donat's under the thin disguise of the Brandlings of St. Salvat's. In this tale the Castle and its surroundings are weirdly, yet exactly, painted. We read of "inland mountain lines, like cliffs, dim in the rain; and at last, over the pale green fields, the sea—quite pale, almost white." . . . Then appeared "the top of a tower and a piece of battlemented wall, emerging from the misty woods, and a minute after we were at a tall gate tower, with a broken escutcheon and a drawbridge. . . . We stopped in a great castle yard, with paved paths across a kind of bowling-green, and at the steps of the house, built unevenly all round, battlemented and turreted, with huge projecting windows made of little panes." Here is the theatre where is played out the unequal duel between the high-bred and accomplished young heir, who is accompanied by his bride, and the rough and dangerous crowd of smuggling, wrecking kinsmen who virtually hold them as prisoners. "What chiefly delights my romantic temper," writes the heroine, "are the woods in which the castle is hidden and its singular position, on an utterly isolated little bay of this wild and dangerous coast." Below the wide descending Castle terraces is a little dingle, as

green and lovely and innocent-looking as can be imagined.

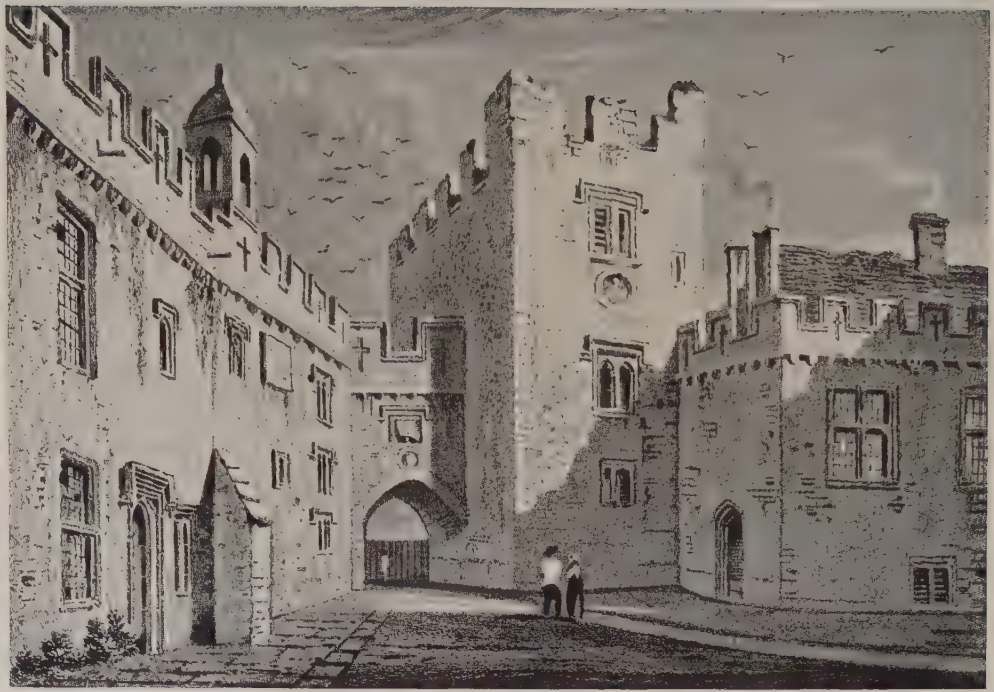
The Watch Tower, unique of its kind, stands on the park slope beyond the dingle, watching the coast for many miles. Its original use was to spy for ships, and to exhibit a wreckers' light; so the old story has it. The tower is quadrangular, thirty feet in height, and its stair leads to a projecting platformed turret. It is a fifteenth-century erection. The church is under the Castle. As one enters the churchyard, the superb cross on the north of the church lends a grace to the tree-kept enclosure and its graves, and the venerable tower. This cross dates from the twelfth century, and it is amazing to think how it has outlasted time and mischance, though the carving on its head has been blunted and weathered. The *Church* is more striking as a living interior, meant for service as well as memory, than Llantwit. The Stradling Chapel, added in the sixteenth century to the original church, is a notable monument to that rare old family. If these tombs could but speak!

The last of the Stradlings, the young and ill-fated Sir Thomas, whose tale we have already told, went to his grave lit by a wild sort of torch-light, for on that occasion a fire broke out in the Castle, and did sad havoc, especially in the picture-gallery—a singular accident to happen on a day of mourning.

St. Donat's, too, has its ghostly visitant. Once a year, Mallt-y-nos, poor Matilda of the Night, comes in a dark gown—some say dark blue, some dark red—to St. Donat's Castle to hunt for the soul of Colyn Dolphyn, the Breton pirate. Colyn Dolphyn was once a name of fate at St. Donat's;

he it was who captured Sir Harry Stradling, who built the famous old watch-tower. Colyn Dolphyn (whose effigy used to be burnt once a year on the sands near Llantwit, so great a scourge was he) put Sir Harry to ransom at 2,000 marks. To pay this great sum five manors were sold by the Stradling family. This happened about 1480. By that time poor Matilda had been hunting the heavens with her ghostly hounds for three hundred years. She was a Norman who came to Glamorgan with Fitzhamon. She was so passionately fond of hunting that when spoken to by a holy man concerning the future life and her conduct here below, she answered, "If I cannot hunt in heaven, I would rather not go there"; a sentiment which rather reminds one of the "En Paradis qu' ai-je à faire?" of Aucassin. For this speech Matilda was sent hunting for ever with the ghostly Cwn Annwn, or Hounds of Hades, who hunt the air on stormy nights with bayings and cries. Did poor Matilda on one of her ghostly huntings happen to meet with Sir Harry Stradling that, even so late as 1850, she should still be hunting his tormentor, Colyn Dolphyn? Sir Harry never returned to St. Donat's, but went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, as did many of the Stradlings, and died on the way home at Famagusta.

Wandering in South Wales, one is apt to look upon castles as giant milestones, and measure one's course by the landmarks they so temptingly exhibit. After St. Donat's one naturally thinks next of Dunraven—a matter of four miles away as the crow flies; but the coast is a difficult one. We are still on the dangerous rocks of the Upper Lias formation, and Nash Point is a formidable place enough. What says the old sailor



ST. DONAT'S CASTLE.

Drawing by Gastineau.

as he runs down Bristol Channel past Nash Point? "If the Great Gutter or Nash Passage roars louder than Breaksea Point" (which he passed awhile ago), "the trip will be an unlucky one."

Moreover, beware of Nash Sands. Why? "Because there is a *winch* in them." Now a "winch" is a very curious thing: a sort of bottomless whirlpool into which, if your body fall, it will never be seen again. So swimmers are warned against the "winch" in Nash Passage, which is known down there as the Great Gutter. Very often a lovely lady sits and lures people into the winch. One cannot help thinking there was a winch in the Rhine, retained in the immediate service of the Lorelei.

In the graveyard at *Monknash* a stone, with an anchor for emblem, may be seen, erected by voluntary subscription—

"To the Memory of the shipwrecked crew of the *Malleny:* Lost on the Tusker rock, 15 Octr. 1886."

The first two occupants of this sailors' grave are simply notified as—

"1. Unrecognized.
2. Unrecognized."

Then follow two younger sailors, duly named. One is the more struck by this gravestone, because of old it was the custom on this coast—notorious for its wreckers—to show small pity or charity to the drowning or the drowned; and here we have the simple confession of much kindness, and the atonement of one generation for another, written on a stone. The waves that break around

the dreaded Nash Point are called "the Merry Dancers," and the souls of the drowned were once thought to be holding revels among them.

Let us get on to firm ground and betake ourselves to Dunraven.

CHAPTER XI

DUNRAVEN — SOUTHERNDOWN — COWBRIDGE — ST. QUINTIN'S — PENLLINE — EWENNY — BRIDGEND — COITY — OGMORE — CANDLESTON.

Dunraven lies over the bold shoulder of the Great Southern Down, above Ogwr estuary, which gives its name to Southerndown, the watering-place. Dunraven Castle itself is a modern one, a building with nothing really castle-like about it, and indeed the most disappointing in the district. The Welsh original form of the name was Dun-drivan, Dinas-tri-fan, the "Dun" of three courts. The spacious stableyard and the garden terraces on the north are sheltered in the wooded cwm behind the huge rocky rampart on which the house stands. The formidable sea-front of this rock recalls the ill reputation that the Castle had formerly as a deadly lure for the vessels passing up and down the coast; and the name of the point, "Trwyn-y-Witch" (Witch's Snout), is quite in keeping with the place. Two centuries ago, when the Castle was owned by the Vaughans, Sir Richard, following the custom, used to exhibit false lights to lure vessels on to the Taskar Rock opposite, so that they might be wrecked on his foreshore and become his property; but the Taskar proved in the end an ill friend to him. One summer's day two of his sons rowed out to the rock, at the

tide's ebb, and disembarking there forgot to secure the boat, which floated away as the tide returned, and the two were drowned in full sight of their parents, no other boat being obtainable. During the confusion a younger child fell into a vessel of whey, and was drowned on shore. So the parents were left desolate, and gave up the place, when it passed to the Wyndham family, now represented by the Earl of Dunraven.

It was an earlier Vaughan, "Mat of the Iron Hand," who was most notorious of all as a wrecker. Between pirates like Colyn Dolphyn afloat and wreckers like Mat lying in wait ashore, the old Bristol-bound East Indiamen and other ships had often a hard passage up Channel.

The double cave at Dunraven is on a larger scale than any on this part of the coast. When the gates are open there should be no difficulty in making a way round by the walks east of the Castle to the descent on the south-east of the Head. But the cave is only to be explored at low water. The sea has worked here upon the limestone, eating out its softer parts, and excavating a cavern, with a nobly architectured portal. You must follow the sea-links westward from Dunraven above Southerndown Sands for "Pwll-y-Gwynt," the "wind-hole." It is said not to have so effective an upward blast as it used to have; but the rush of air and the noise, harsh or rumbling, of the waves have a curious and uncanny effect as the tide returns. The *Fairy Cave* lies still a couple of hundred paces further on in the same direction—so called because of its fairy-like limestone mouldings, not because it is especially the haunt of the "Tylwyth Teg," or Fair Family.

The Welsh traditions that are, or have been, grafted on the rock of Dundrivan are too many and too obstinate to be neglected. By the first and stubbornest of them, the old British caer here was the stronghold first of Bran, son of Llyr, then of his son Ceredig or Caractacus. After Fitzhamon had got hold on Morganwg William de Londres seized on Dunraven and Ogmore, and planted the usual makeshift site-appropriating castles. While he was away at Kidwelly, the Welsh under Pain Turberville—for already there were Norman quarrels afoot—attacked the new seats and domains, and were driven off by Arnold Butler, castellan and deputy of De Londres, whose reward in the end was Dunraven. It remained in the Butler family for centuries, and then by an heiress's marriage it went to the Vaughans—an interesting case of Welsh reversion. Another two centuries, and Sir Richard Vaughan, after the drowning of his three sons, sold the ill-omened place to Humphry Wyndham, who also had Celtic blood in him, being of Irish stock. That was in 1642, and one wonders whether the O'Neil massacre of the previous year had anything to do with Wyndham's desire for a Welsh estate? He married a Welsh wife, Jane Carne of Ewenny; and of that marriage come the present Earls of Dunraven, who seem to maintain a certain love of the sea. One wishes they would build a proper castle worthy of the site, as well as racing-yachts.

One morning, after exploring the headland and the Witch's Snout, I and David were tempted by a vain desire to link Dunraven with the other inland castles. He surmised that Sir Arnold, *alias* Arnold Butler, was figured in one of the Arthurian tales—the Welsh *Decameron;* and that

another knight of the same levy came from Penlline, near Cowbridge. So thither we rode by devious ways—on bicycles.

Looking from Penlline Hill, one can easily recall the Cowbridge that was first circled with walls and then with castles. For, beyond Llanblethian and its castle and fine church, you have Beaupre on the south-east and Nash on the south-west, and, a little further on, Flemingston, with Fonmon and Penmark within an hour's ride; and about the same distance from the coast, working west, East Orchard Castle and West Orchard Castle, and then, to wind up, the sea-front fortified at every strategic point and every part, from Barry to St. Donat's and Dundrivan (Dunraven).

Like the Vale of Glamorgan, in whose very heart it lies, Cowbridge town is cut in two by the river Thaw; and its interminable street rises slowly from its half-way bridge in either direction to the East village and the West village. A side-street leads to the Grammar School and the church, and reveals some remains of the older Cowbridge that the founders of the Grammar School, with Sir Leoline Jenkins at their head, knew. This shy street leads out eventually through an old archway, passing the limits, plainly visible there, of the old town-walls; and so arrives in a green region of hill and meadow, with the *Castle of Llanblethian*, or St. Quintin, within a mile or less. Thither lies a most delightful summer's afternoon walk; for although little of the Castle is left, it lends the place its flavour of memorial things. All that is to be seen of it may be inspected from the road. It consists chiefly of the arched gateway, with part of a tower and remains of the shell of the outer court,

Down below, the massive abutments of the church tower, and the other external effects of Cowbridge Church, make it look like a fortified thing too. The church interior is puzzling; for since originally it was merely a chapel-of-ease to Llanblethian, it was designed on a smaller scale. Then, as Cowbridge town grew, and more seats were required, first one aisle was added to the nave and then another to the Chancel.

"Penlline Castle was the first bold landmark to be descried, looking westward from Cowbridge. It was placed on a fine natural site so as to command the Vale of Glamorgan, in a way that must have been very formidable to conjecturing besiegers. Formerly, when St. Quentin's Castle was fully manned and armed on the hill of Llanblethian over Cowbridge town, and the walls and gateways of the town below were complete, this must have formed almost a perfect example of a Norman fortified valley, armed at all points because it went in continual terror of the Welsh hill-lords and highlanders." So David.

If you return to the western high-road, bound for Ewenny, after leaving Penlline, you reach, at two miles from Cowbridge, the spot known in Welsh as "Milltir Aur," or Golden Mile, where, the legend declares, Einon and Iestyn paid their Norman allies in gold for their services in defeating Rhys; and then quarrelled over Iestyn's daughter.

"This lady I gat by my prowess in arms, and the prowess of my Frankish allies!" Einon said no doubt, much after the fashion of Sir Hontzlac of Gwent.

But Iestyn, thinking the Frankish host well disposed of, was not ready to fulfil his promise

and give up his daughter. The end of this we know. Einon recalled his Frankish friends, and the end was the battle where Iestyn fell, at Mynydd Bychan (Little Mountain), now known as the Heath, Cardiff. But meanwhile one's heart bleeds for Iestyn's daughter, and grieves like Gwiffert over Enid, to see "one of her noble mien so deeply afflicted!"

The Golden Mile points the way now to Ewenny Priory. It is impossible to-day to approach Ewenny in any spirit of mediæval piety, any taking of romance, without hearing the monks chant within, as one catches sight of its noble abbatine tower among the trees.

The old Abbey Church, with its massive fortified true Norman tower, bulking large in its green surroundings, recalls too Freeman's praise. It gives you the best idea you can gain anywhere of an ecclesiastical strong-house, "union of castle and monastery in the same structure!" Only part of the exterior can be seen, for the northern side, the transept walls, that is, abut on the private grounds. Within, the impression is of a sombre, august building, such as our modern eyes can rarely see. The burly pillars, rude Norman arches and round-topped windows, are all in keeping. The whole building is not left to us; but the nave and north aisle, and the southern flank of the transept and the Priory Chapel, are enough to show the whole strong design. The tomb of the founder, Maurice de Londres, is in the Priory Chapel; and other tombs of other old Norman and Norman-Welsh houses, the Turbervilles among them, and the ubiquitous Carnes. It is hard to realise now the strength and size of the whole monastic settlement. Signs of the great battlemented wall are

plainly to be discerned ; but one must be permitted to explore carefully the surroundings of the present house and the garden-close to replace all the range of buildings. The present mansion was built in George III.'s reign.

Ewenny was founded as early as 1146, as a Benedictine monastery ; that is, while the Norman tenure of this region was still a hazardous one. It must have taken many years a-building. When it passed into the hands of the Turbervilles, whose descendants still hold it, we cannot say. The Turbervilles were originally allotted Coity in the Fitzhamon parcelling out of the district. Among the tombs will be found some curious epitaphs, and particularly this, which is impressively turned, in honour of one of the Carnes :—

> "Here lys Ewenny's hope, Ewenny's pride,
> In him both flourish'd, and in him both dyd.
> Death having seis'd him, linger'd loath to be
> The ruine of this worthy family."

After such a crow's circuit round these ancient houses and lands, one is seized upon by a curious sense of the actuality of the scenes and episodes that have become romance; they are in fact now a part of our collective memory. You lift the lid of an old tomb at Ewenny, and the creature of actuality looks out at you, half "a fiendly dragon" like an heraldic beast, half the plain human visage of a Carne or a Turberville.

In Welsh, Pen-y-Bont-yr-Ogwr (End of the Bridge of Ogwr), Bridgend formerly owed its name and character to its command of the Ogwr, once a fine old salmon stream. The town, like many other quiet country places, is not amusing

to the casual wayfarer, save when fair-days and market-days bring country people and life from without into its long streets. Bridgend has nothing to show of its vanished "Old Castle," which still gives a name to the southern quarter of the town, placed on the east bank of the river. Its "New Castle," as its higher and better site deserves, still stands siege with a gateway and ruined court, and still gives a name to the northern suburb of the town, on the west bank of the stream. In crossing the old bridge for the church and the New Castle, casual acquaintance may be made with the Ogwr. You will not see a salmon, but you will see a salmon-water which thousands and thousands of that noble fish have coursed. Sixty years ago and more this bridge was the rendezvous for the salmon poachers of the town, who, leaning over its parapets, pipe in mouth, used, as gossips tell, to calculate the state of the water and the chances of the night's sport.

Writing eighty years ago, Hansard gave a notable account of these night-poachers and their ways :—

"From the commencement of the spawning season, at the latter end of September, until January, parties are engaged every moonless night in spearing salmon by torchlight, whilst roaming upon the shallow gravelly streams in search of a suitable spot for depositing their ova. On such situations they congregate to the number of twenty or thirty in a shoal, rooting up the bed of the river like hogs. The poachers, aware of their favourite haunts, assemble about midnight, and having kindled a small bundle of straw, by means of a tinder-box, one of the party holds the light over the water, being closely followed by the spearman, armed with a heavy trident, and behind walks a third person, carrying on his back a large supply of fuel, as, in windy nights especially, the straw is rapidly consumed. The instant that the surface of the stream becomes illumined by the torch,

which renders every object, even the smallest portion of gravel, distinctly visible, the whole shoal of salmon dart towards the light, and the spearman, instantly selecting the largest fish, hurls his weapon with unerring aim, and, if an old hand, never fails of transfixing his scaly prey. He then immediately throws the fish upon the bank, and, quickly disengaging the spear with his foot, stands ready to repeat the blow. It frequently happens that, if he strike a large fish, the poacher is compelled to leap into the stream; for the salmon proves exceedingly strong in his element. These depredators proceed, in a similar manner, from station to station, until the approach of day warns them to depart."

We read that "on the 13th of August, 1838, 112 sewen were caught, at one haul, in this stream."

Leaving the old bridge, if we go up the Castle Hill, we come to the Square, where we have St. Illtyd's Church on our left, and closely neighbouring it, perched higher on the riverside cliff, the remains of the Castle itself. A tower, a broken curtain wall, a part of another tower, are all that is left of the stronghold whose strength once made it possible for the town to wax fat and prosperous under the hand of its castellans. Sir Simon de Turberville was the original founder. To find the traces of Bridgend Old Castle, at the other side of the town, is more difficult, and all we can do is to point out its site and a possible remnant of its stones in some of the older houses near the river. It was situated in a low, badly chosen site, behind the present Church Street, on the opposite bend of the river, whose waters were doubtless used to surround it, and isolate it, if necessary, in time of attack.

A footpath may be taken to Coity Castle, once a very important stronghold—one of the five strongest in all Glamorgan. It stands on an earth-

work, which may have been there long before the Castle; for if there is anything certain in a disputed land of hilly circumstance, it is that the same sites are likely to be seized upon over and over during the succession of occupiers, British, Roman, Welsh, Norman. The most striking part of the ruin is not the oldest, and probably dates no further back than Henry V.'s reign.

The late G. T. Clark says of the Castle (in his *Land of Morgan*): "Pagan de Turberville had Coity, much celebrated in bardic story as the seat of a royal lineage. He, or his son, strengthened their position by marrying the dispossessed Welsh heiress. The family always showed Welsh sympathies, and continued to hold high rank in the county till the fifteenth century, when the main line failed." Morgan, whose daughter thus made the first Welsh-Norman marriage on record, was a great man in his day. He challenged Pagan (or Payn) de Turberville to single combat, if he preferred that to marrying the maid. The maid's eyes settled the matter, for the Norman handed his sword to Morgan as a sign of friendly agreement. From the Turbervilles, Coity passed to the Berkrolles and Sydneys.

From Bridgend or from Ewenny you easily reach Ogmore Castle. Not much is left of it but the keep, the broken containing-wall of the close, and the now scarce discernible ground-plan of the chapel. The powerful De Londres, who built and held it, would find it hard to recognise his kingdom in this gapp'd and crack'd decay. But while men and castles dwindle, the Ogmore limestone spring, at the edge of the down, about three hundred yards east of the Castle, is as strong and lively as ever, and is now used to supply Bridgend with water. The

supply never gives out in the driest season ; and this and the strangeness of its sudden apparition account for the folk-tale which accords it an underground passage to St. Bride's Major. The limestone all through South Wales is something of a natural magician. One curious property of the spring is that it is of dual character, one of its currents being of much harder water than the other, and impregnated with magnesia.

From Ogmore Castle, it is but a step on to Candleston (or Cantilupeston) Castle, which can be reached in a twenty minutes' walk. First cross St. Teilo's stepping stones, as the Saint may have done long ago (when he had a wattled cell near the spring), then cross the swampy ground between the Ewenny and the Ogmore and the bridge over the latter. *Candleston Castle* lies on the left, through the lane and along the fir plantation, on the brink of Merthyr Mawr warren. The Castle, one of those built by De Londres, picture of desolation as it is, its last tower confronting the sands, shows no sign now of the supposed Flemish work about it and its scanty remains. At the end of the eighteenth century a mansion was built near by, but that too is gone to ruin. The trees have a grey and wizened air, as if they sympathised with the old walls. Candleston, with rabbits for sole tenantry, with its sandy ravine and ghostly woods, has lost touch with history ; but it might, if it could, tell of the day when the men of De Londres rode across the sands from Newton Nottage, carrying an unhappy prisoner with them—a luckless Welsh raider whom they could presently bind fast to a post and then leave him to the tender mercies of the incoming tide.

CHAPTER XII

NEWTON NOTTAGE—PORTHCAWL—KENFIG—"THE CLERK OF KENFIG"

It is a wild stretch of coast that runs westward now from the estuary of Ogmore River. The battle between sea and land is fought there with endless change of fortune: the sea hurls up billows of sand to choke the fields and bury the houses; the land sends out deadly ridges of low rock to the murder of ships that pass in the Severn Sea.

Newton Nottage here stands back from the sea, with a broad belt of half-clothed dunes between. The village is a survival of other days, worth making acquaintance with, whose people are people of character and humour, and of a canny quality too, unless one proverb belies them. The church, again, is original in its antiquity; and its tower is not like other towers, but has an "air," not easy to realise as it stares across at the Merthyr Mawr warren like some amazed and amazing creature spawned by a primitive world. Its interior is remarkable for its carven pulpit, depicting the Roman soldiers beating with thongs the person of the Saviour; and the approach to the pulpit is unusual and ingenious enough to please a child.

Here is St. John's Well, whose sweet water rises and falls with the sea-tide. Not far from it to the south-west are the remains of a small circular enclosure. In the year 1820 the Rev. Hey Knight was told by the old people of Newton "that there had been a custom of kindling a fire in it annually on midsummer day, throwing a small cheese or cake across it, and then jumping over the embers."

The same writer gives detailed particulars of the shore, which, he said, "westward from the Black rocks consists of drift sand and rolled pebbles. This flat beach is divided at Newton Point and Middle Point by skers or projecting ridges of low rock." Each of these spits, as well as the higher point at Porthcawl (so named from two fishing weirs formerly placed there), is probably continued into the Channel to the south and east under the names of the Patches and the Tusker. The latter rock has a beacon on it, and is especially dangerous from the deadly skers which open out at its western end; upon them the tide sets with a heavy break in rough weather.

Knight does not mention the local superstition, still current to-day, that on nights foreboding storm, a warning phantom light is seen hovering over the Tusker Rocks and the Sker Rock. Another of the flood traditions lingers in Newton; there is an old prophecy that "the sea shall return and ships be moored to a sycamore-tree growing on the top of Newton Clovis." If we like to take it so, we may find an extraordinary confirmation of this saying in the fact that when the foundations of an old house in this neighbourhood were re-dug, a drift of sand like a raised

beach was found below them. The sea had been there before; just as certainly the sea is gaining upon this coast again.

Dutch vessels northward of their true course, and deceived by the similarity of soundings, sometimes came up the Bristol instead of the English Channel—an error often fatal before lighthouse days. A flat stone in Newton Churchyard commemorates the loss of a young family, three sons of J. S. Jackerd, sent from Surinam in the planter's own ship westward bound to Amsterdam, wrecked on the night of the 3rd of June, 1770. Many soldiers lost in one of the transports for Bristol in the Irish Rebellion, 1798, were buried in Cae Newydd, Porthcawl, and the plough for long spared the turf above them.

This is the region which Blackmore has pictured in his *Maid of Sker*, on the whole the best novel of South Wales and its sea-coast ever written by any writer. Sker House lies direct south, and the sands of Sker lie rather to the west of Kenfig. But Newton Nottage, as readers of the novel in question may like to know, is *the* village of the story; and at Nottage House the late Mr. Blackmore stayed for a time, and there gathered the local lore and material that he turned to account afterwards.

Newton Nottage lies at the base of a little promontory that juts well out into the Severn Sea, catching the freshest and raciest Atlantic breezes. Here is Porthcawl, a delightful little place for those who happen to like it. The town is no more than a couple of streets or so, one ending in a paved, wind-swept esplanade. Add to these a small dock, and just as much shipping of coal and limestone as may lend an air of business

to a summer day, and beguile the visitor into whiling away a lazy afternoon and thinking he has done something, since a vessel has stowed her bunkers and put to sea: and that is Porthcawl.

On a rough day the waves make great play about the miniature pier that defends the dock, and a walk along the salt rampart may end in a cold shower-bath on the head of the unwary. But there are calm days at Porthcawl when it is excellent to sit and dream among the tansies on the low cliffs with an eye on the clean half-circle of sand and the blue curve of the tide as it advances or retreats. As for the wildish surroundings of Porthcawl, no summer haunt could be more delightful than its miles of dunes. "There are," writes G. R., "extraordinary numbers of wild flowers, many in their miniature state, to be gathered here. Nowhere have I seen Viper's Bugloss grow as it does on these dunes in wizard rank and file. It is a queer plant, with its grey-green bristly foliage and curved flower-spikes that change from bright rose-colour to brilliant hue. It was a friend to the Greeks, who gave it its strange name of Cow-tongue Viper-bite Healer; cow-tongued because the curious curve of the flower-spike is exactly that described by the tongue of the cow who fetches clothes off a hedge or tufts of grass from the sod. It may have been some Greek herd-girl, who, while she sat on the ground to watch her cows feed, noted the curious prehensile twist of the tongue, and first gave this name to the flower."

In the sandy desolation east of Porthcawl lies all that is left of Kenfig town to-day: a scattered hamlet with the last fragment of a castle tower thrust

up like the hand of a buried man through the sand. Entering Kenfig to-day by its loneliest road from the east, one hardly believes in its existence as a live place, so dispersed and silent among its sands. Even its church tower is not at once visible, and the few houses are hidden in the perspective, one behind another. But this loneliness and unusualness makes the place more interesting in the day of towns. Passing by the first old inn, you cross the sandy turf, find a sort of sandy lane or street, and make the circuit then of the churchyard, and enter by the stile on its west side. The church is nothing architecturally, but it is in tune with the place.

The old Town Hall is now the Prince of Wales Inn, and there may be seen the old town charters, and other documents, bearing witness to the Kenfig that was. To-day it is a place apart, like no other that I know; an amazing place with an heroic record: the struggle of the community during hundreds of years with an irresistible army of sand, whose tents and entrenchments you see all round it. "The sand came up like snow and buried the houses," the old people will tell you. To-day the drift still goes on; while six hundred years ago it was coming steadily inland, each storm bringing the sand higher. The first mention of these inroads is preserved in the record of reduced rent for a warren called "the Rabbits' Pasture," "because the great party is drowned by the sea." This was in the year 1316. More than two hundred years later the good traveller John Leland writes: "There is a village on the Est side of Kenfik and a Castel, booth in Ruines and almost shokid and devowrid with the Sandes that the *Severn* Se ther castith up."

No wonder that the place wears the look of wild desolation to-day, which was already a ruin and desolation, choked and devoured, nearly four centuries ago.

Yet it was (for that day) a large and important town that waged this losing battle, as we learn from the Kenfig ordinances drawn up in the fourth year of Edward III., which any curious persons can read in Mr. Thomas Gray's admirable book on Kenfig. It was a walled town with paved ways; it had from seven to eight hundred inhabitants. It had a river up which came merchandise and timber in "ship lettes." It had a stout paternal government of portreeve and burgesses. Most of the houses were of wood, and the town was not only drowned in sand, but burned again and again; for the nest of fighting-men up at the Castle were for ever waging war, and each battle that came up against it first burned the town by way of recreation. It was for ever being rebuilt, and later on more soundly: the ordinances certainly disclose a most respectable state of things.

In these days of licensed shoddy and exploitation of the poor by rich manufacturers, it is a wholesome lesson upon national backsliding to read these Kenfig ordinances. The very first is that "Good and sufficient bread" of "true size" shall be sold to the inhabitants "on pain of a grievous amerciment at the portreeve's pleasure." Then comes provision for good and wholesome ale and fresh meat; also cheese, butter, eggs, capons, and other "good and wholesome and sufficient victuals unblown." The leather must be good. "Every tanner using the mystery of tanning shall sell their leather well and suffi-

ciently tanned accordingly, upon pain of forfeiture of his said leather or a fine."

They were very particular to keep the town tidy; no tradesman or housewife must throw anything whatsoever into the street; each tenant cleans his own piece of street; "and where the streets be unpav'd, every man to pave the same, upon pain of amerciament, before his door." No milking was to be done in the town; "nor none shall suffer their beasts to abide in the High Street nor in noe other street by night nor by day, but only going and coming to and from their pastures." "Noe manner of person shall have any swine going within the town walls."

On the point of good behaviour these burgesses were quite as strict as on that of cleanliness. "Noe stranger shall walk by night after nine of the clock." "Noe manner of person shall play at dice, cards, bowles, nor no other unlawful games within the said town." All "licentious naughti-packs" were fined ten shillings. "Brawlers and fighters that draweth blood the one upon the other shall pay three and fourpence for the bloodshed."

Women brawlers were differently dealt with. "Item it is ordained that if any woman be found guilty [by six men] of scolding or railing any burgess or their wives or any other of their neighbours, then she to be brought at the first fault to the cucking-stool there to sit one hour, and the second fault two hours and third fault to lett slippe"—that is, to let the poor scold slip into the water.

Alas! all this righteousness could not save the town from the onslaught of the sand. A hint of this ever-present danger can be discovered in

the wording of the last ordinance. "Noe manner of person or persons whatsoever shall reap any sedges neither draw nor pull any rootes nor cutt any furzes in any place whatsoever, nor do any other thing that may be to the ruin, destruction and overthrow of the said burrough."

More than two hundred years after the expiring town utters a sad complaint, which is appended to these ordinances in the reign of Elizabeth. The poor burgesses "doe yearly fall in arrearages and losses . . . by reason of the overthrow, blowing and choaking up of sand in drowning of our town and church" (this church is completely disappeared), "with a number of acres of free lands, besides all the burgages of ground within the said lybertys except three for the which burgages so lost by the said overthrow yett nevertheless the rent thereof is and hath allways been paid to the lords receivers to the portreeve's great loss and hinderance." Poor Portreeve.

It is strange that Kenfig should not only have been engulfed in sand, but that there should be a legend, of a much earlier period, retailed by Iolo Morganwg, to the effect that another town was swallowed up beneath the waters of Kenfig Pool. The Pool is not visible from the village, but it lies within half a mile of it. You have but to follow westward the sandy track on the north side of the church, and skirt the hedge that divides the cultivated fields, then, from the sandy heath, and as the last enclosed fields ends, make for a small group of trees a little ahead. These trees do not stand on the edge of the water, as they might appear to do, but the Pool is plain to see when they are reached. In spite, or because

of, its desolate surroundings, the Pool is a place that exerts a positive fascination, quite enough to revive the feeling that the Welsh attached to their lakes and llyns and legends of lost towns. The teal and wild duck, as they take wing or skim the water, lead their own life, undisturbed by the ghosts of the past. An old boathouse, two or three paces from the northern shore, stands in the water, as sole sign of human visitation on its banks.

There it lies, sweet-watered, among the choking sand-hills that are slowly reducing its sixty-eight acres ; so near to the sea, girt round with sea-sand, below the sea-level, and yet always fresh. The waters of the sea can be seen when the sunlight favours, shining and hovering apparently far above its head, an uncertain ridge of sand-hills between. As you look into the pool, you do not wonder that tradition attached a tale to so mysterious a spot, that had seen Roman, Norman, and Welshman alike disappear.

The legend of Kenfig Pool is very like that told of Llangorse Lake, or Llyn Safaddan, in Breconshire. But the Kenfig story is still more significant: one to be recalled with a strange context in this countryside of mixed Welsh and Norman romance, for it has a Welsh hero, in love with a Norman heroine, a daughter of the Clares. As he is too poor to marry so rich a lady, he murders a Norman steward on the road from Gloucester, to get enough money to provide for the match. On the wedding night a fateful cry, "Dial a ddaw" ("Vengeance shall come"), is repeated thrice. They ask when vengeance will come, and the mysterious voice of the avenger says, "In the ninth generation."

With this deferred fate the newly-married pair console themselves. What does it matter, when they will be dead long before the day of vengeance comes? But Fate knows how to be equal with Time. They live on, far past the human term, and see one generation succeed another, until the ninth comes. Then a descendant of the murdered steward of nine generations before remembers the prediction, and, remembering, returns from Caen to Kenfig. That very night he notices that not a house or a holding in Kenfig but is held by the descendants of the ill-fated pair, who still survive. Next morning, at cockcrow, the same voice of Fate is heard saying "Vengeance is come!" The Norman predestined to see fate accomplished, who has found quarters overnight in the Castle, goes to look for the city; but can see only a great lake where it stood, and three chimneys near the surface of the pool giving forth a foul smoke that settles in a scum on the water. And as he watches, a pair of gloves comes floating to his feet, and he sees they bear the name and arms of the murdered man of nine generations before, while in heaven he hears the sound of many voices rejoicing, no doubt in the Norman tongue! The realistic touches of the close—the fetid smoke, the floating gloves, complete the story as nothing else could.

Thus Kenfig saw in its midst not only destroying flames and the overwhelming fury of the sand, but also the overwhelming waters which legend adds to its strange domicile.

The sand is now extensively worked, and transported by rail for building and other purposes; and many a drift has been driven into the vicinity of the old town. But every autumn and spring

the winds more than make good the exported sand. To prevent its further encroachment, the tenants of the surrounding farms have to agree, as one of the conditions of their lease, to plant a certain amount of the burrows with the sand rush, *Arundo arenaria*. The burrows are now used as a rabbit-warren, and gamekeepers are apt to think the amiable antiquary, in the quest of relics, a new kind of poacher bent on interfering with the "small deer." It is as well, therefore, to keep to the slender tracks which cross the burrows in all directions, lest one set one's foot in a snare.

The last echo that history carries to us from a defeated and submerged Kenfig is a sinister one enough. Donovan, travelling through South Wales at the end of the eighteenth century, writes that "the distant tower of Kenfig church serves as the best guide, there being only a cart-track besides to depend upon. Kenfig once harboured a desperate banditti of lurking fellows who obtained a profitable livelihood by smuggling, the plunder of wrecks, &c., whom it was necessary to visit with caution."

I saw no trace of smugglers, but after dark I heard a cheerful sound from an inn near the church; like the last of the Welsh ballad-mongers using his art. There, by a great fire, sat two sand-boys, who worked in filling the sand-carts and wagons by day. My entering silenced them for a time, but after supper, when I returned from the parlour to the long, low chamber with the cavern of a hearth at its end within which they sat, one of them, after much pressing, began to sing, or rather to hum behind his pipe, a mile-long ballad in Welsh, which I had much difficulty in following. Next morning the rain was oceanic;

and I amused myself with a rude translation of what my confused memory had left of the wicked "Clerk of Kenfig":—

THE CLERK OF KENFIG.

The Clerk of Kenfig is drinking hard,—
  Drinking night and day;
He cannot bear the driving sand,
Salt with the sea, wild with the wind,
  That blows from Kenfig bay.

This night, I think, the sou'west wind
  Is worse than ever it was:
The Clerk,—he had better pray than drink,
For the sand might be blown from Pharaoh's land
  By a blast of the Samoon's jaws.

It is in the church and over the graves:
  It is in at the Clerk's own door:
He has swept it up, but what is this
Doth spin and twine in spirals fine
  Its thin thread on the floor?

The Clerk is afraid to go to his bed;
  He has piled the hearth up higher;
But the sand comes down the chimney-louvre;
The grit is in his drinking-cup,
  The silt puts out the fire.

And still he sat and still he drank
  Until the night grew old:
And then there came a triple knock
Upon the door, upon his heart;
  It made his heart turn cold.

And "Come, good Clerk," and "Come with me!"
  A voice said at the door:
"This night, thou know'st, is All Saints' night:
"The church is full, the dead-folk wait;
"They have waited this hour and more."

Thereat he gat him up; but when
  The Clerk undid the door,
The sand fell in like a heavy man,
And like a man-tall drift of snow
  Lay huddled on the floor.

It lay there like a drunken man,
  That could not rise again:
But what might be an angry hand
Was at the priest, to have him out
  Into the rigid rain.

* * * * *

"Stand up, good Clerk, in Kenfig church:
  "Unsay the word you said,—
"The dead who lay beneath the sand
"Should never rise at the Lord's right hand
  "At the rising of the dead! . . ."

"And Christ thee keep, thou cruel Clerk;
  "And Mary in her might;
"Around thee kneel the blessèd dead:
"And thou shalt say the Creed, and pray,
  "And preach Christ risen this night!"

He saw them kneel, as he fear'd to see,—
  The folk of Kenfig there,—
Yes, Roger Dunn, and Mary John,
And the Spanish captain that was stabb'd
  By the old squire of Sker.

He feared to see them stare on him,—
  A death's-head every one:
But their faces gleam as they gaze on him,
And their eyes beseech like marigolds
  That do beseech the sun.

They stare on him, not stained with death,
  But cloth'd in white and clean;
Yes, white as sea-mews by the sea,
He sees them kneel there blessèdly,—
  And not a death's-head seen.

Stand up, good Clerk; stand up and preach
"The Resurrection!"
But the sand hath parched his nether lip,
He cannot say a word nor pray:
His grace hath from him gone.

Yet now the Holy Rood hath found
A voice to call them home:
It speaks them kindly, one by one,
And one by one, the dead are gone,
Like sea-mews from the foam.

The rood was bright with candle-light
Until the last was flown;
The darker then the mortal dark
That settled on the soulless Clerk
Like the night of Babylon.

Christ keep thy feet in Kenfig street,
And save them in the sand,
Where the cruel Clerk of Kenfig lies
That did deny the dead to rise
And sit at Christ's right hand.

CHAPTER XIII

MARGAM AND MARGAM PARK—THE ABBEY AND THE ORANGERY—MONASTIC THRIFT—OETH AND ANOETH—PEN DAR "THE OAK SUMMIT"

It is but an hour's walk from Kenfig-in-the-Sands to Margam-in-the-Trees, but the two places might be leagues apart; they are in different worlds. House and church at Margam are tree-sheltered, situate with every green favouring circumstance about them. The well-stocked deer-park, the lake that is passed on the way from the church to the house, and the old camp on the mound two hundred yards north-east of the mansion, the oak-clad mountain above, and the wooded mountain cwm, give the scene a wealth of verdure which at Kenfig you could not believe to be possible.

The actual Abbey, however (including the old west front), converted into a spacious parish church, struck me as rather bare and much more impressive within than without. Externally the effect, as the restored portions have not had time to gain any softening of age, is cold. The tombs of the Talbot family, and in their far finer degree the little collection of old Celtic crosses, lend statuesque effect to the north and south aisles. There are the rich monuments too of the Mansel family; notably one with figured panels of alabaster, quaintly ornate in design. On the

opposite side of the church, in the north aisle, is the tomb and marble effigy of one of the Talbots, who died young in 1883. The round-arched western doorway shows how fine the original Norman building must have been.

John Pritchard, the Llandaff architect, says of the Abbey: "Like most Cistercian churches, the place consisted of a nave with north and south aisles, a central tower flanked by north and south transepts with their eastern aisles; behind these came a magnificent choir with its north and south aisles, and in close contiguity to the south transept there is a superb chapter-house, in front of which was the large cloistered court, surrounded by the usual various buildings, which in general arrangement are said to bear a strong resemblance to those of Westminster Abbey. At the east end is a Norman central doorway, and over it three Norman windows. Inside, the arcades are Norman, consisting of six bays, and they occupy a space of 115 feet, which is the limit of the existing church. Beyond this was the thirteenth-century church, with central tower and a magnificent choir, 82 feet long, with north and south aisles, unfortunately all destroyed. At right angles to the church were the dormitories over a length of vaulted cellarage, the northern end of which had a handsome vestibule with a fine central doorway leading from the cloisters to the chapter-house. Its internal diameter is 50 feet and circular in plan, with an elegant central clustered shaft, from which springs an elaborately groined ceiling divided into twelve bays."

The chapter-house roof fell in 1799, since which the decay of the place has given way to continual restoration.

The Orangery, on the south-west of the house, was built in 1770 by the father of the "Father of the House of Commons." It stands on the site of the old residence of the Rice Mansels, which had its orangery, too, filled with trees, and with other rare plants wrecked off the coast, on their way from Spain to the Thames. Out of doors many trees that love the south—bays and maples—flourish at Margam, owing to its protected site, in an extraordinary way. In the woods above the oak is king, clothing the slopes of the stream and the steeper hillsides.

The name of Margam—said by some topographers to come from Madoc Gam, or Mawrgam, son of Caradoc ab Iestyn, and one of the traditional founders of the Abbey in 1147—is probably "Morgan" only in disguise. Gerald the Welshman visited Margam with Archbishop Baldwin in the same century. A little later came King John, who held the place in great favour; and no doubt he was royally entertained. But here is Gerald's account of its miraculous hospitality :—

"This monastery, under the direction of Conan, a learned and prudent abbot, was at this time more celebrated for its charitable deeds than any other of that order in Wales. On this account it is an undoubted fact that, as a reward for that abundant charity which the monastery had always in time of need exercised towards strangers and poor persons, in a season of approaching famine, their corn and provision were perceptibly by Divine assistance increased, like the widow's cruse of oil by the means of the prophet Elijah."

There are indeed corroborating records preserved among the Margam Abbey charters of grants of seed-corn and other relief dispensed to poor neigh-

bours in time of scarcity; but by far the larger number of documents relate to the ceaseless industry of the monks in collecting the land itself in return for grants of ploughs and corn. The monks will undertake to feed and clothe a poor man who has a few acres and is in "urgent need," and they will have his land of him in return. It is astonishing how much land they swept up in this way, and how enormously rich and powerful they became. Widows, it seems, were a fruitful source of profit: they parted with land and houses for small sums of ready money and the powerful countenance of the monastery. Poor people often mortgaged their land too, and there are frequent instances of this mortgaged land passing entirely over to the monks.

It is well to keep in mind this side of monastical tactics without forgetting the other; the monks were able, learned, and prudent men; they were industrious and hard-working, first-rate agriculturists, the only gardeners of the time. The monks of Margam were, after the Romans, the only mineralogists; it was they who first sought for and found the minerals of South Wales. Besides this, the monastery was the hospital and workhouse of the district, and they comforted (an important point) as well as relieved the suffering and wayfarer.

Gerald himself supplies us with two most naïvely told little stories, which perfectly illustrate both these monastic functions.

"About the time of its foundation," says he, "a young man of these parts, by birth a Welshman, having claimed and endeavoured to apply to his own use certain lands which had been given to the monastery, by the instigation of the devil set on fire the best barn belonging to the monks, which

was filled with corn : but immediately becoming mad, he ran about the country in a distracted state . . . and in a few days expired, uttering the most miserable complaints."

Here is the other and handsomer side of the picture :—

"In our time too, in a period of scarcity, while great multitudes of poor were daily crowding before the gates for relief, by the unanimous consent of the brethren, a ship was sent to Bristol to purchase corn for charitable purposes. The vessel, delayed by contrary winds, and not returning (but rather affording an opportunity for the miracle), on the very day when there would have been a total deficiency of corn both for the poor and the convent, a field near the monastery was found suddenly to ripen more than a month before the usual time of harvest; thus, divine Providence supplied the brotherhood and the numerous poor with sufficient nourishment until autumn."

Older memories still than those of the monks cling to Margam; the ghost of a grisly old tale, alive since Roman times, haunts the hillside and the plain-land of Margam. For here, according to ancient history, a great battle was fought between Caradoc and the Romans ; and when the dogs and the wolves and the ravens were done with the bones, they lay like a white sheet over the land. Then Manawyddan, the son of Llyr, caused these bones to be gathered up (the bones of the Cæsarians, he called them), and likewise all the Roman bones anywhere to be found, and he had them made into a great mound. For a while he reflected, gazing upon them (Manawyddan was a powerful wizard chieftain) ; then the idea came to him to have the bones mixed with lime and built up into a prison for captives taken in war, and he called it the Prison of Oeth and Annoeth (Power and Weak-

ness). In process of time the bones rotted, and the walls were pulled down and spread over the valley, and a great crop of wheat and barley grew up the next year. We can believe as much of this story as we like; but one thing is certain, here is a theatre of wild events; here runs the Roman road over hill and valley to Kenfig; and we may be confident that where Roman and Celt, Celt and Saxon, Celt and Norman met, there were sanguine doings. The Roman roads and the great Norman castle chain were never built to subdue an ignoble enemy.

The climbing oaks on the mountain-side above Margam Park, in which the wind sometimes makes a noise curiously like that of hidden waterfalls, affirm the age of the place. The Welsh called the old plâs in which the immemorial Morgan or Morcant lived after the Oak Hill, Pen Dar—that is, Head or Summit of the Oaks. "Derw," or "Derwen," the Oak Tree ("Dar," *plural*), is a word of force in Welsh tradition. You must roll the "r" well in speaking it, as if you really heard the wind roughen in the Margam oaks on the day when the equinoctial gale blows away the last shred of summer. The Welsh term for a Druid, "Derwydd," puts an oak-tree at once over his head; he becomes a folk-lore creature like the Old Green Man of Gloster or Wild Man of the Woods. "Tir gwydd" is rough forest-land, land that has never been ploughed or tilled. There is a strange couplet in a poem of Meilir, which suggests that you had better know your oakwood before you break faith with your friends:—

"Yni fwyf gennefin a derwin wydd,
Ni thoraf a'm car fy ngharennydd."

("Till I am used to the oakwood, I will not break friendship with my friend.")

"Yr Wyddfa," you will remember, is the wildest and highest crest of Snowdon.

Two things you read in the Margam records are calculated to make you look back to the Kenfig sands, and then strain your eyes seaward for a vain glimpse of Lundy Island, as you climb Margam Hill. One is that the first serious invasion of the Glamorgan coast by blown sand was as early as the year 1384. The other was that the Abbot of Margam got into trouble for abusing the right of sanctuary. He had, in fact, given harbour to that desperate pirate and outlaw, William de Marisco, when he was ousted from his sea-eyrie in Lundy Island; of whom we shall hear more when we sail across thither. The putting out of William de Marisco, with something in his pocket, from the Abbey gate by the too-hospitable great cleric was a scene to be put into drama. But you must look for that gateway of the Abbey in a meadow across the road, far from the present entrances.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TOWN, CASTLE, ABBEY AND VALE OF NEATH—AN OLD TOWN—A CASTLE OF THE GRANVILLES—A CISTERCIAN HOUSE—AND A VALLEY OF WATERFALLS

"From the sea they made their way towards Wales, to the Castle of Noeth, wandering hither and thither like convicts, fugitives, and daft persons."—HENRY OF KNIGHTON.

HENRY OF KNIGHTON'S "Castle of Noeth," or the Castle of Neath, was all but another lost castle when the modern town that seemed ready to swallow it up turned its protector and converted its ruins and last-threatened gateway into an urban pleasance with a charming view up the Vale. A good market town, Neath is still seen in its plenitude on a fair-day, when country stalls eke out the shops, and the country people, making an indescribable hum and gossip, crowd the streets; for then the scene best recalls the mediæval market held under the strong arm and the haughty castle-walls of the Granvilles. The parish church hardly lives up to the ecclesiastical gold and purple of Neath and Neath Abbey; but it was, so far as much restoration permits one to say, a noble as it is still an ample building. The Castle, as you gaze on its towered gateway, will

strike you as very like that you saw at Llanblethian; here the surrounding houses have eaten up most of the walls, and seem none the better for it. Tramways run through the Neath streets and out into the black country beyond; and one cannot do better, when going to Neath Abbey, than take the tram. But let the story of this old town briefly rehearse itself first.

Neath—"Castell Nedd" in Welsh"—is the Latin "Nidum" of the Antoninean Itineraries, and formed an important station in the "via Julia Maritima." Then, when Fitzhamon parted the lands of this district, he gave the town to Richard de Granville, who built about the Castle and the Abbey, probably employing Lales as builder. The Castle saw some fighting at various times. In Stephen's reign the sons of Caradoc ab Iestyn attacked the town and its Norman castle, men and castellan, and defeated them, according to Welsh tradition, with frightful slaughter, three thousand falling in the battle. One wonders if they chose a market-day for the attack—a favourite time for castle surprises. The next overtaking was when Morgan Gam and Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, retaliating for Norman wrongs elsewhere, burnt the Castle and sacked the town, marching west from Kenfig. Neath obtained, through the interest of the De Spencers, a new charter from Edward II., who, as Henry of Knighton and others have already told us, passed through the town on his last unhappy Welsh journey, to be taken at Llantrisant. The copper, tin, iron, and chemical works that give the town its modern industrial effect—and its smoke, alas!—date back to the eighteenth century. The Corporation Seal shows a castle with two meaner buildings on either side, pro-

Photo by] [*Williams & Curnuck, Newport, Mon.*

NEATH : THE OLD CHURCH.

To face p. 149.

phetic, as one supposes, of its factories and foundry sheds.

The river Neath ("afon Nedd") is tidal beyond the town, and navigable for the smaller kind of craft. At low water there were several fords in use before the river was bridged; and very unsafe the lower ones were, if we can judge by Gerald de Barri's most exact account of how he and the Archbishop crossed this water in their rôle of spiritual knights-errant. They were on their way from Margam, and had a Welsh prince, Morgan ap Caradog, for guide; and made the passage at the river-mouth, where, because of the quicksands, says Gerald, this is the most dangerous water to cross in all the South country. One of his pack-horses sank in the sand, and was hardly saved, and then only at the cost of some damage to this intrepid book-man's precious books. As for Gerald and the Archbishop, they gave up the ford after all, and crossed by boat. But very keenly one smells the salt-sand, and realises the wet shore at the Aber of Nedd as one reads Gerald's page.

The water-meadows between the town and Castle of Neath and the Abbey were once proverbial for their greenness. Now they are a grimy desert. The easier way, as we said, to the Abbey is by tram from Howard Square; the conductor will put you down at the old Copper-works crossing, where you can turn down the line to the gate of the Abbey. The ruin, in its extraordinary gloomy predicament of smoke-soiled, weather-worn and hopeless decay, is like nothing else in the countryside. Its architecture, too, is confusing at first, because the Hoby family converted the place into a Tudor seat in the year 1650. Tudor windows and gables are seen here and there incongruously

wedded by the ivy to the old Norman arches and parapets. The Hoby house is at the right-hand corner as you enter. The nave and choir of the church are easily recognisable; and so are some of the living apartments—the abbot's lodging and the broken inner wall of the refectory. After the first melancholy of the ruins has passed from the explorer's mind, and a working acquaintance with the place and its details has been set up by an hour or two's investigation, he begins to restore the faded colours and ancient splendour of the magnificent picture of the Abbey by Lewis Morganwg:—

"Like the sky of the Vale of Ebron is its covering; weighty is the lead that roofs this abode—the dark-blue canopy of the dwellings of the godly. Every colour is seen in the crystal windows; every fair and high-wrought form beams through them like rays of the sun-portals of radiant guardians. Here are seen the gold-adorned choir, the nave, the gilded tabernacle work, the pinnacles; on the glass, imperial arms; on the ceiling, kingly bearings; and on the surrounding border the shields of princes, the arms of Neath of a hundred ages; the arms of the best men under the crown of Harry. The vast and lofty roof is like the sparkling heavens on high; above are seen archangels' forms; the floor beneath is for the people of the earth, all the tribe of Babel—for them it is wrought of variegated stone. The bells, the benedictions, and the peaceful songs of praise, proclaim the peaceful thanksgivings of the White Monks."

The White Monks were Cistercians. At the dissolution of the monasteries the revenues were valued at £150 per annum. When the Hoby family gave up residence here, it fell presently into the state of a kind of Cadgers' Hall, and was allowed to run into utter neglect. At present, it is well cared for by the Dynevor family, whose

property it eventually became. But all the surroundings, the wild marsh, the smoky desolation made by man, seem to call out for decay.

Richard de Granville, who founded the Abbey about 1120, is said to have been tormented by remorse for his sins—we can hardly suppose by qualms for his sins against the Welsh, because those did not count for much in the Norman estimate—and his remorse, taking urgency in a mortal dream, led him to think of bribing the Church and Heaven by the truly munificent bribe of Neath Abbey. The Welsh name for the place, "Abbaty Glyn Nedd," the Abbot's House in the Vale of Neath, suggests that its surroundings were once fair enough to be ranked with the wilder natural beauties of a vale still famous for them. The effigy of Abbot Adam of Carmarthen, that used to lie in a field near the Abbey, is now removed to a safer spot in the grounds of Court Herbert.

But the water of Nedd that goes seaward past the old "Abbaty" is one of the most incalculable of the wanton rivers of this river-shot country. Above the town, the stream brings one into a country of watery sensations and rocky surprises—a country of the water-fall and the water-kelpie, and of countless legends. Every turn of the Vale starts a half-forgotten folk-tale and a lurking tradition of the kind that fed the mediæval tales with Welsh furmety.

Pont Neath Vaughan is the base from which to explore the upper Vale of Neath and its waterfalls. As the name declares, it bridges the Neath (or Nedd), and it stands very near the confluence of that stream and its wild tributary, the Mellte. The road from Glyn Neath Station, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles away, runs alongside the railway line on leaving that

station for a space of two hundred yards, and then dodges under a railway-arch, and so makes for the river, which it crosses. Then, turning presently north, it follows the old Neath and Merthyr Canal, skirting Aberpergwm Park, with its pleasant hall standing back towards the wooded hill, capped by Craig Llwyd. In this hillside are one or two shy streamlets, with rarely visited cascades, quite worth exploration. They may be reached by a rough lane, turning left at the lower end of Glyn Neath village, and ascending the hill. A daughter of Aberpergwm it was—Jane Williams—who did good service to Welsh music by collecting many of the airs in her volume of songs, and became the pioneer of the "Welsh Folk Song Society" that is now doing the same lyric service.

Passing Aberpergwm, the road crosses the canal, and arrives at the Lamb and Flag Inn, an old coaching inn. Another turn right, and then another half-mile straight ahead will bring you to the straggling village of Glyn Neath, and so to Pont Neath Vaughan. Thence again the road zigzags through a twisted street and splits, sending one branch down to the Mellte glen and on to Craig-y-Dinas, while another climbs the bank on the main road to Ystradfellte. On the water-side one must not be discouraged by a brick-works nor the gate of a powder-works, for a footbridge leads thence across the stream, and turns to skirt Craig-y-Dinas, rock of many legends, which indeed still looks ominous.

As the face of Craig-y-Dinas shows you at a glance, the stone has been quarried heavily in the last fifty years. Pictures of it as it was a century ago, allowing for a little artistic exaggeration, show a more giantesque front; but it still looks a

strange legend-provoking monster with its limestone shoulder starting up clean-cut in the Vale. From above, and standing on its brink, one imagines a fall over it to be a dead-sure thing; but a few years ago a drunken man incontinently fell from it, and, extraordinary to relate, recovered from his wounds and broken bones.

Beneath the rock, Craig-y-Dinas, lie sleeping and awaiting the day of Welsh deliverance—so runs one of the most mysterious of all the "Sleeping Warriors" folk-tales—in a deep dreamless sleep, the soldiers of Owain Lawgoch. Another version makes the hero King Arthur himself. A shepherd boy (so the story goes) cut a hazel-stick from a tree that grew upon Craig-y-Dinas, and went one market-day to the town of Neath. There a stranger, an old wandering beggar-man with a staff and a long grey beard, paused as the boy passed by the lines of cattle, and fastening his eyes on the hazel-stick asked its owner where he got it.

"On Craig-y-Dinas!" answered the boy. The old beggar-man was seized with a trembling. "Take me there!" he said, "and you shall have all the gold you can carry for your trouble! So the boy led the old man up the vale to Craig-y-Dinas, and up its sides, till he came to the place where he had cut the hazel-wand. Close beside was a cleft in the limestone, and this afforded a narrow entrance to the top of a rude stairway, descending into the rock. The old man pointed the way, and the boy entered, and so descending they found their way into a dimly lit, lofty cavern, ten times larger than Porth-yr-Ogov. Here the dim light disclosed a confused array of sleeping soldiers with their spears and shields and breast-

plates stacked about them. One of these stacks the boy in the half-darkness overturned, and the noise disturbed the sleepers. In their midst slept the chieftain, Owain of the Red Hand, and rising amid them he stood up, asking, "Is the day come?"

Whereupon the boy, who had been prompted by the Grey Beggarman, answered, "No!—Nagyw, cysgwch eto!" Cold with terror, the boy stood watching as the warriors, with a sigh, sank again into their deep slumbers. Then, remembering the old man's words, he seized upon a leathern bag that was full of golden coins and carried it off to his guide, who bade him quickly return for more. But when he would have entered the cave his hands struck against the damp stones. He returned then to ask the Beggarman what he should do. But night had fallen by this, and the old fellow had disappeared, and the boy found himself wandering like one bewitched on the edges of Craig-y-Dinas. After that night he was never able to find the cave again; and so the soldiers of Owain Lawgoch still sleep there enchanted, waiting till the day of deliverance shall come, when they shall start up, full armed, to deliver the Cymric realm.

One of the things which suggest that Craig-y-Dinas is really a bewitched place, is the fashion in which the two streams, Mellte and Sychnant, have cut their way on each side of it, with their two distinct glens or cwms, steep and deep, within a stone's throw of one another and yet divided by this strange buttress of limestone. Moreover, the Sychnant, as its name of Dry-brook tells, dispenses with water at the latter part of its career under the south-east side of Craig-y-Dinas, or commonly so buries it out of sight that it does not count.

A Cyclopean barrier of rocks, about three hundred yards from the lower end, shuts off the cwm from convenient exploration. The wildness of the Mellte is rather spoilt by the powder-mills, but indeed the picturesqueness of the place is mixed with something evil and fantastic to a degree. What we find at Craig-y-Dinas we find all through this land of unaccountable glens and innumerable waterfalls.

One more Craig-y-Dinas tradition, and we are done with it. This story tells that the mysterious Welsh faery-damsel, Blodeu-wedd (or Flower-Aspect), who was made out of flowers and was converted into an owl, according to one of the *Mabinogion*, was really entombed under Craig-y-Dinas: that is, if Meirchion's daughter was the same as Blodeu-wedd, who had a fashioner, but no human father in the ordinary sense.

A modern rhymer of old Welsh romances has put the wild forest legend of Flower-Aspect, or Blodeu-wedd, into a mysterious lyric:—

THE FLOWER MAIDEN.

"They could not find a mortal wife,
And made him one of flowers:
Her eyes were made of violets,
Wet with their morning showers.

They took the blossom of the Oak,
The blossom of the broom,
The blossom of the meadow-sweet,
To be her body's bloom.

But they forgot from Mother Earth
To beg the kindling coal:
They made for him a wife of flowers
But they forgot the soul,"

The sound of falling waters is heard, resounding in many pitches and rough tones, from Craig-y-Dinas; for there are certain small falls on the Sychnant within easy hail. The Sychnant swiftly descends from very high ground; and a track may be found from the upper end of Craig-y-Dinas, which passes a hut and then rapidly ascends the hill of a thousand feet off that looks towards Hirwain, some five miles away, and the mineral highlands that lie about it.

The Sychnant exhausted, you can, by passing to the left side of the tool-cabin, at the upper side of Craig-y-Dinas, follow a path along and well above the east bank of the Mellte, until you reach, after half an hour's going, the Hepste stream, which flows from the Hirwain highlands into the Mellte. On the Hepste, at some five hundred or six hundred yards above the juncture of the streams, are two falls—the Lower and Upper Cilhepste Falls. The path you are following will bring you to the bank of the Hepste, in the midst of the Lower Falls, which descend in three cascades. This, as we come nearer, is, after a heavy rain, a very definite Niagaraean roar, angry and profound. The fall is one of the finest of this series. It is peculiarly set, so as to afford usually a safe and dry passage right beneath the water. The sheer fall of the stream is over what would be a very respectable house-side—to be accurate, fifty-three feet. The footing under its water is, except at one point, owing to some dislodged stone, quite safe, so that even timorous people need not be afraid. Having crossed beneath the Cilhepste Fall, you need not return, but can follow the path that bears off towards the Mellte, skirting the under-

woods, above the Hepste, with a view to the Clun-Gwyn Falls, passing again the Lower Hepste cascades on the way; and when one of them is below and one above, striking off up the Mellte, and then down through the trees of the glen.

The lowest, and finest, of the Clun-Gwyn Falls is reached in some five minutes from this point, and not far above the glen pool. This waterfall, although so differently placed from the Cilhepste, and not so abrupt and not nearly so high, is by connoisseurs thought incomparably finer. The pool below is haunted by a fabulous and monstrous fish, that cannot be caught, and that has the uncanny peculiarity of appropriating all the hooks he swallows. Keeping up stream, and humouring the left bank, you are brought in a few hundred yards to the second of the Clun-Gwyn Falls (it is easy, by the way, to confuse what appear to be short cuts across from the Hepste). This second, or middle, of the Falls is more dispersed; but its rocks are strikingly water-cut and strangely fringed with trees and shrubs. In late autumn the colours of the trees become softened here to very unusual hues; and the autumn rains easily convert the Mellte into a really imposing stream, and make these falls even look majestic.

The upper Clun-Gwyn Fall is only to be approached by some lively skirmishing, now on the east bank, now on the west, taking advantage of the latter bank, and the track skirting the fringe of trees above it, as far as the mouth of the upper of two brooks that enter the Mellte by the east bank. A footbridge crosses the Mellte at the turn above, and then the path is easy to Hendre Farm whence a road runs to Cwm Porth Farm.

There a guide may be had to take you to the famous river cavern, Porth-yr-Ogof (Gate of the Cave). From Cwm Porth it is quite worth while to proceed on to the hamlet of Ystrad Fellte, after exploring the cave, which is certainly one of the nine wonders of Breconshire.* A couple of candles or a good lantern and a box of blue and red flares ought to form part of your equipment in exploring the cave. Otherwise not half its mysteries and secret recesses can be discovered, and the Mellte, coming out of the darkness with much rushing and grumbling, is no safe guide. The best way down into the mouth is by a track from the upper side. The appearance of the dry river-bed is uncanny, and the mouth of the cave, with a huge lintel that seems intended for a vast entrance whose lower half has been filled up, the issuing stream, and the general strangeness of the surroundings, all speak of a kind of geological necromancy. It is many years ago now since the last legend was added. A strange man made his way to the cave, with a gun—led by what sense of the sombre spirit of the place one can only conjecture grimly—and there shot himself. His body was found eventually by a passing shepherd's collie-dog, and now lies in an unknown grave, I believe, in Ystrad Fellte churchyard.

Once the strange portal is entered, although there is such ample space, the uneven pitch of the rocks and the irregularities natural to the mining of such an indefatigable mole of a river, make the exploration difficult. Now one is on a

* The boundary-line of the two counties, Brecon and Glamorgan, was passed at Pont Neath Vaughan, and is defined westward by the course of the Nedd and Perddyn, and eastward by the course of the Sychnant.

rock, and the head of the Afanc appears, and now, unless one is careful, one is in danger of slipping over a wet stone into Peredur's pool. The roof is hung with lime pendants and other stalactitic fantasies. On one side of the cave a side-passage runs off, and straitens itself in the stone. The whole effect of the interior is uncanny and unreal; and, unless one has been accustomed to the interior of lead- and iron-mines, utterly bewildering. The further subterranean channel of the river between the cave, where it makes its disappearance, and its reappearing point below, is 250 yards in all. It is hard to credit Iolo's story of the ten-year-old boy who once scrambled right through the underground tunnel. But possibly the channel at its exit is more choked now than used to be the case in Iolo's day.

From Ystrad Fellte the turnpike leads across the uplands, to Pont-Felin-Fach on the Nedd River, here known in English as the Little Neath, and the Upper and Lower Nedd Falls. There you are within easy range of the Perddyn; and the Perddyn has two falls, which are among the best in the district, including the Scwd Gwladys, or Lady's Fall. Its aspect is a little like that of the Cilhepste Falls, with a jutting ledge, and a space behind the water, sufficient only in very dry seasons, however, to carry you to the other side, which there is no object in reaching. It is a considerable pull up from this fall to Scwd Einion Gam, which is the loftiest of all the Vale of Neath falls, and quite one of the finest; its setting in the rocks and trees is most wildly effective.

This may seem a long diversion of the coast itinerary But to know a coast, you must know the streams too that form its abers and that have

joined forces with the sea to carve it out. You watch with a sense of quickened acquaintance the river Nedd flow out and meet the tide, when you return from the two days' adventure of the valley of waterfalls.

CHAPTER XV

SWANSEA AND SWANSEA BAY—ANN KEMBLE—THE AUTHOR OF "TWM SHON CATTI"—LANDOR

SWANSEA BAY, the bay of Walter Savage Landor's delight, is still one of the fairest harbours you can wish to see. It describes a divine curve, whose beauty not all the copper-smoke on its shores can destroy. More than half a lifetime ago the present chronicler spent an autumn and winter at Swansea; and the place still carries traces of a child's fanciful town about it with exaggerated streets and houses. There is something, too, in its air, in which copper-smoke, salt-water and tar seem blended with the usual smells of commerce—a smack of antiquity that threatens to betray a secret at every turn. Swansea, indeed, is individual, as great towns go—bless its ugly face and dirty splendour! It has thrust its castle into a backyard—a man may walk through the town to-day without seeing the tower above the Post Office. It has not found itself architecturally. The only really modern sign of man's handiwork is to be seen at the great docks, at which the last buttresses of the Castle stare down in wonder. Its churches, railway stations, public buildings, houses and shops, are quite unworthy of its immense wealth. Yet it was on the programme a century

ago that Swansea would be the civic queen, the London, of South Wales. As it is, she is content, it seems, to be the Cinderella: rather glorying than otherwise in her cinders.

Swansea is in Welsh "Abertawe," which is more patent than the English name, since it places the town at the mouth or aber of the Tawe River. The name Swansea may come from Sweyn, sea-pirate and "Black Pagan," a Danish invader of the early centuries, who went down in a sea-fight off Sully. The other derivation from swans, or sea-swine (porpoises) we cannot away with. The Tawe stream flows down from that wildly desolate, lonely lake on the east side of the Van mountain, Llyn-y-fan-fawr, and takes a south-westerly course through the lower slopes until it pours itself out into Swansea Bay, and makes a port of Swansea town.

If you enter the town viâ Landore, you accompany the river for the last and most dismal part of its course. Emerging then from the Great Western station, you can turn down High Street, following the trams; at its foot Castle Street continues the thoroughfare, suddenly contracted at this point. At the lower end of the next narrow stretch of street you reach the old centre of the town, whose heart and head were its Castle and Castellan. Two different sets of Post Office buildings have eaten up part of the Castle site, but some of the old walls may be seen behind it. A small second-hand book-shop (where you can pick up rare Welsh books), near the gates of a wheelwright's yard, may help to direct you to the north side of the ruin. Thence the Castle extended for a space of seventy yards originally, northward behind what is now Worcester Place, and southward along Castle Square, commanding, because of

OLD SWANSEA: THE CASTLE AND HARBOUR.

From a drawing by W. Turner.

its position above the riverside, the whole waterway and network of the great North Dock.

One afternoon David and I turned in at the lower entrance of the Castle yard, and were gazing at the walls and wondering how to get into the Tower, when an ancient dame appeared on the scene. We followed her up an outer flight of steps, but she did not offer much encouragement to explorers.

"The stairs," she explained to us, "were thick to your ankles with dirt and dust, and some of the steps were gone so bad you couldn't go up to the top. The Duke of Bewfort [Beaufort] couldn't bear having the old place touched—'don't ye so much as lay a finger on it,' he said."

A most unseemly sort of midden lay below, full of ashes and refuse. David asked her if the Duke would not have that touched either?

"No," she said, with a confidential change of tone; "he will not have the old place touched, His man once went to lime that wall, and the Duke was very vexed at his doing it: 'Never you do such a thing again!' No, he will not have a finger lifted in the old place. Some say he wants to come and live in it himself!"

I did not like to observe that there was a mean between whitewashing the old walls and keeping the dirt out; for we wished to conciliate her, and prove we did not mind the dust on the Tower stair. Finally, grumbling some last objections, she went for a key, and let us into a match-boarded room hung from end to end with bits, bridles, saddles, and other trappings of the 1st Glamorgan Territorials. This helped to bring back something of the military illusion of the fortress. A small door, and a dark winding stair within it, led on from this

chamber; and our guide supplied a long wax taper to light us up—a very necessary weapon, as it proved. She adjured us to be sure and look through a hole at a stage half-way up, when we heard a noise like a jackdaw, to see the mighty works of the old town clock. Evidently for her this was the wonder of the Castle. We heard the clock, just as she had said, and we gazed eagerly through the crevice into the small chamber whence the noise came, but saw no such spectre or double of a long-imprisoned clock-maker as the noise seemed to promise. Some further stumbling rounds of the dark staircase, and we passed a door and parapet; and a last dark flight and ladder led out into a kind of crow's nest with a dismantled rusty crown-piece filling nearly the whole of it. From this perch the sudden spectacle of the wealthy and dirty capital of Glamorganshire was to be seen in one confusing orbit in the afternoon sun.

The far-spread enginery and long lines of the docks and great ships came first; then part of a street, a bit of timber-yard, the roof of a new hotel, a pretentious draper's palace, a bleak hill with a row of poor houses half-way up it, a corner of a slum, and many belching chimneys, all pitched together in an extraordinarily affecting disorder, so that one wished for a Meryon's genius and etching-needle to record it. Beyond all lay the curved bay, of a bright azure in the sun: like an angel in a blue robe asleep on the brink of a cinder-heap. All the materials for a great city were here. but in what a state of neglect and chaos!

* * * * *

Swansea Castle, since the days of Beauchamp de Newburgh, when it was built, has kept but a meagre account of its sieges and sallies. The

need for such a fortress arose when the Normans decided to hold Gower, and saw that a few links more must be added in the district to the lengthening chain of castles. Swansea Castle was on the whole lucky in the Welsh sieges that followed. In 1113 Griffith ap Rhys, and in 1192 Rhys ap Griffith, invested it: in both sieges Welsh quarrels saved it. Gower was raided from end to end, during more than one of the assaults on Swansea Castle; Swansea town was ransacked and burnt more than once when the Castle escaped.

One of the first things to strike the invader of the Castle to-day is the likeness of the little parapet arches to those of the Bishop's Palace ruins at St. David's. They were built, in fact, by the same builder, Bishop Gower, about the year 1342. Previously to that the Castle had had some hard knocks; and its most famous captain, William de Braos, contriving to offend the King, was obliged to leave it and fly to France, where, tradition says, he died. When his kinsman, Giles, Bishop of Hereford, held it, that is in 1215, Llewelyn the Great assailed it in force, and appears to have overthrown it with many of its dependent castles in the Gower castelry. "In Swansea," sang Llywarch ab Llewelyn—

> "In Swansea, that peaceless place,
> The castle-walls are rent;
> A peace, like death, prevails.
> . . . . .
> In Swansea, that strong-walled fort,
> The Key of England, the Saxon is slain;
> All the women are widows!"

The Castle changed owners many times, the De Braos family often appearing as its lords. But

in 1324–1325 it passed into the De Spencers' hands; and then for a last time, and for only a short time, to the heirs of the De Braos' house, the De Mowbrays. Owain Glyndwr was the only Welshman who assailed it with any success after its rebuilding by Bishop Gower; but he did not seriously damage the actual structure. In 1470 we find a charter allotting the Castle (with Oystermouth and Kilve) to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke; and an heiress of that stock carried it then over to the Beaufort family, its present owners. During the Civil War it saw some fighting again, and for the last time. A local historian can tell us the tale:—

"There is a libellous tradition that it was taken and retaken three times within the same day, and no blow struck! but this is only a malicious invention. At some time in its history there must have been hard fighting and slaughter here, for when the foundations of the Post Office were dug in the Castle precincts, no less than fifteen skeletons were found in a very small area. Walter Thomas was the Governor in the King's interest, and Colonel Philip Jones succeeded to the command of the garrison on behalf of the Parliament, when Oliver Cromwell was 'Lorde of this towne.' On the 3rd March, 1647, it was ordered by Parliament 'that Swanzey Castle be dis-garrisoned, and the works slighted.' Later on, the fortress, probably then much dismantled, suffered the indignity of being let to Matthew Davis, a local Roundhead, for 99 years, at £2 per annum."

There the record may end.

Leaving the Castle, and continuing your way then to the lower town, you can go down Wind Street to gain the older shipping purlieus. There, at the point where the railway bridge and its iron girders cross the street, groups of sailors standing about remind you how large a part the seafaring life plays at Swansea.

One morning, when we had missed a train at the London and North-Western station, David beguiled me into a tour of the older docks. There he contrived to strike up acquaintance first with a ship-painter who was painting the footbridge over the dock-gates, and then with a friendly "hen wraig," clad in the true Glamorgan style—double gown and petticoat, and thick flat-straw hat with frilled border, who sold black lavar-bread and cockles on the quayside. He boarded next a French barque, the *Demoiselle* of Bordeaux, and discoursed queer French to the captain.

To all which the captain smiled and responded in easy-going English, "Take a look over her, my boy, and welcome, but excuse me, as I have to run up town!"

In that circuit of a single pool, the smaller of the Swansea docks, we saw, as if they had been got for a museum, nearly every kind of vessel that has sailed water from the day of Nelson onward. Coasting vessels like the *Pierre* of Bordeaux, the *Jean* of Roscoff, the *Polly* and the *Lucy Smith*, and great steam-vessels like the *Duke of Wellington*. Around us the warehouses and wharves gave out mixed odours of spice and grain, and the water provided others, not easy to analyse, not over sweet, yet remarkably smacking of the salt sea.

It surprises one to turn suddenly amid these shipping places and to spy the Royal Institution, whose colonnade, seen in this unexpected seafarer's place, gives a classic air to the street that leads on to the South Dock.

Entering the place, we found on the staircase some interesting old pictures, a portrait of Sir Hans Sloane (of Sloane Museum fame), one or

two portraits of gentlemen in armour or in scarlet, a Dutch classic piece by Jordans, and many prints and documents tinged with Swansea antiquity. Among these was to be discovered the veritable marriage deed or contract of affiance between Edward II., then Prince of Wales, and Isabel, daughter of Philip IV. of France, dated May 20, 1303. We know how the story of these two ill-mated people ended, and the disaster that the weakness of the one, and the over-weening strength and ambition of the other, "the she-wolf of France," helped to invoke. It was, in fact, due to its tragic ending that this document in the case came to be left at Swansea. Edward, flying to Wales from his fate, waited at Swansea, hoping, as one story tells, to get a vessel and cross to France. But either no vessel was forthcoming, or Swansea grew too hot for safety, and Edward turned back in haste to Neath, leaving behind him all the impedimenta he could not safely carry away. Long afterwards a small oak chest containing this and other documents was handed over to a Swansea doctor by some poor people who could not pay his doctor's fees. Probably it had been lying in the garret or cellar of one of the queer tenements that filled the Swansea slums at the time this transaction took place.

In the cases upstairs will be found stones and fossils that were privy to the making of the coal measures and of the rocks that give the Glamorganshire scenery its individuality. Here, too, are the broken relics of the Bone Cave, Bacon Hole, Paviland, and others in Gower, which ought to be well scrutinised before you go thither. Among the cave-creatures whose bones are to be seen are the rhinoceros, elephant, bear, wolf,

hyena, badger, polecat, red deer, and buffalo. The "Red Lady of Paviland" may have seen these creatures in the flesh; but she keeps her own counsel. In another room some of the strange fish that have swum into Swansea Bay may be found surviving their day—whale, sea-devil, sun-fish, shark! And in another room are coins, traders' tokens, old seals, found in the district. Here, dryly observes the best of familiar historians, "here also are mummies, the key of Oystermouth Castle, and a cast of the head of Ann of Swansea."

Poor Ann of Swansea! She still haunts the fancy of the sentimental tourist as he wanders through Swansea to-day and catches sight of the bay, remembering her lament:—

> "The restless waves that lave the shore,
> Joining the tide's tumultuous roar,
> In hollow murmurs seem to say:
> 'Peace is not found in Swansea Bay.'"

Ann deserves her niche in the gallery because she was one of the few modern romance-writers who have lived and died in Wales. Her stories are forgotten, all save that of her own strange life. "Ann of Swansea" was one of the Kembles, sister to John Kemble and Mrs. Siddons. After an unfortunate marriage to a scamp (who deceived her, being married already) she was only rescued from the extreme of poverty by her richer relations. Then, in 1792, she married a Mr. Hatton, and went with him to New York. Returning to England, after an absence of eight years, they settled in Swansea, and kept for five years the "Bathing House," an hotel and house of assembly.

This did not succeed. On the death of Mr. Hatton, in 1806, his wife went to Kidwelly, and, notwithstanding her lameness, kept a school for dancing and deportment. In 1809 she writes again from Swansea, where she continued to reside, at No., 15, Park Street, on an income of £90 a year, allowed by her relatives until her death in 1838. She lies buried in the St. Mary's New Cemetery, behind St. John's Church, but no one knows the precise spot. She wrote three volumes of poems and some fifteen or sixteen novels, one of which, *The Chronicles of an Illustrious House*, created a ferment in Swansea because of its local allusions. A photograph from a picture of Ann of Swansea is in the Deffett-Francis Collection in the Art Gallery.

Another more original tale-teller than Ann of Swansea was that eccentric creature, I. J. Llewelyn Prichard, the author of *Twm Shon Catti*, who wrote, too, in his *Heroines of Welsh History* a brief biography of Maud de Haia, Moll Walbe, of Hay Castle and Swansea Castle. Prichard spent the latter part of his life at Swansea, not very happily, I fear. Local gossip has it that he was derided by little boys and the vulgar "on account of his artificial nose, which was kept in its place by his spectacles. He fell asleep one day over his books in his poor lodging at Thomas Street, and his death was accelerated by the burns he got from his clothes and papers taking fire." Besides *Twm Shon Catti* he wrote much on Welsh subjects, and everything he wrote was written with a certain queer force and whimsicality, shown alike in his way of seeing things and in his way of putting them.

Twm Shon Catti he described as "the first

attempted thing that could bear the title of a Welsh novel." He was led to attempt it by the success of an absurd play in London, played at the Coburg Theatre, called—

TWM JOHN CATTI;
OR, "THE WELCH ROB ROY."

"This second title," he says, "which confounded the poor Cambrians, was a grand expedient of the dramatist to excite the attention of the Londoners, who naturally associated it with the hero of the celebrated Scotch novel; the bait was immediately swallowed. Great was the surprise of the sons of the Cymry to find their practical joker, Twm Shon Catti, elevated to the degree of a high-hearted injured chieftain, uttering heroic speeches and ultimately dying for his Ellen a hero's death."

The play was based directly on a tale in a queer, half-humorous volume called *The Inn-Keeper's Album*, and published in 1823. "Twm John Catty: the Welch Rob Roy" is much the longest and absurdest story in the book, written in mock-heroic prose and in defiance of time and history. The characters are of all ages: "Owen Glendower" appears by the side of "Twm John." Twm himself, invincible by men, has to be got rid of by lightning. Prichard's Welsh wit was revolted by this stage-travesty of Twm, converted into a pasteboard hero. Fielding, teased by the sentimental art of Richardson's *Pamela*, turned to *Joseph Andrews*, and this anti-romancer wrote his humorous novel of *Twm Shon Catti* in protest against a high-falutin play.

Prichard wrote a book of poems, too, which was published by Leigh Hunt and his brother John in

1824. It is nothing like so original as his tale-writing; but the longest poem, "The Land Beneath the Sea," has a fine subject, the drowning of the "Cantref-y-Gwaelod" or Bottom Hundred, and some fine passages. One of these bears quoting in the account of the drowning of the "Cantref"; but the absurd two lines that stick in the ear persistently, out of Prichard's *Welsh Minstrelsy*, are printed on the title-page:—

> "Oh, list to the minstrel who sweeps the Welsh telyn,
> Hear, hear ye the harpings of Jeffery Llewelyn!"

Prichard seems to have at one time gone touring in South Wales with some theatrical "fit-up" companies; and one cannot help wondering if he in his function of stage-manager also produced a version of "Twm Shon Catti." His own history, could one but recover it, would be as entertaining as anything he invented. The date of his death is given by Asaph in the *Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen* as 1874; but the third edition of *Twm Shon Catti*, 1871, mentions his death at about a year's remove.

Walter Savage Landor spent three of the most precious years of his life between Swansea and Tenby. His first book of poems had been published in London by T. Cadell and W. Davies in 1795, and not long afterwards he seems to have left London for South Wales on an allowance of a hundred and fifty pounds a year. He led for the most part a very solitary life: "I lived chiefly among woods which are now killed with copper works and took my walks over sandy sea-coast deserts then covered with low roses and thousands of nameless flowers and plants trodden by the naked feet of the Welsh

peasantry and trackless." If this is true of his lonely days, it is certain that he found the friends a young poet looks for. His earliest Welsh love he called Ionè, which was his poetic rendering of Jones:—

> "Ionè was the first; her name is heard
> Among the hills of Cambria, north and south,—
> But there of shorter stature, like herself;
> I placed a comely vowel at its close
> And drove an ugly sibilant away."

He found other loves in Wales, one Irish, whom he called Ianthe, and one English, Rose Aylmer—whom he met at Tenby. It was Ianthe who lent him the book, a history of romance by Clara Reeve, in which he found the Arabian tale that struck him by its sombre antique splendour. *Gebir* is the same root as Gibraltar, and the story is Spanish and Moorish; but the colour in it, we may be inclined to decide, is partly Welsh. He began to write it in Latin as *Geberus;* but returned to English. Then, wandering in North Wales over the grouse-moors near Bala:—

> "Above the lakes, along the lea
> Where gleams the darkly yellow Dee;
> Through crags, o'er cliffs,"

he bore his precious verses with him and there contrived to lose them. Some months later they found their author again at Swansea:—

> "When over Tawey's sands they came
> Brighter flew up my winter flame,
> And each old cricket sang alert
> With joy that they had come unhurt."

He was under the influence of Pindar and Milton, two powerful demons (as Blake would say), when he wrote *Gebir*, and the style is often Miltonic, and sometimes great. No doubt it has Landor's noble defects; it is writ in marble, and the rhythm is stiff and wants variety. But it was a great poem for a boy of twenty to write. It can be best read, not continuously but in episodes, as one walks the shore of Swansea Bay, where many of its close-compacted pages were written.

CHAPTER XVI

PIRATES' ISLAND—LUNDY—MARISCO'S CASTLE—BENSON'S CAVE—THE DEVIL'S LIMEKILN—AMYAS LEIGH

ONE of the finest sea-sensations on or off the British coast is to be had at Lundy, which lies within a couple of hours' steam of Swansea. I first saw the island in June, when daybreak begins before 3 a.m., and we did not take the shortest passage, but set sail early from the Mumbles Pier on the Welsh side of the Channel. A fair westerly breeze cleared off the last of the rain as we started, and the colours of the Glamorgan hills grew vivid all around the superb curve of Swansea Bay—the bay of Landor's delight. We did not sight Lundy till just upon noon, for we had a long tack to make in order to call at Ilfracombe. We were followed all the way, I remember, by a single gull that seemed to keep itself poised exactly above the jackstaff at the stern. Its only mate was a canary whose cage hung in the foc'sle. That bird never saw the sea, but the gull must have heard the creature's incessant indoor shrilling.

As we neared Lundy, a darker sky and a threatening squall made the line of cliffs look angry and sepian. Before we got into closer quarters the sun was out again, and what had seemed all granite

changed into grassy steeps and fern slopes, ending in a sheer drop at one-third of their height. But round the anchorage, beneath the jutting Lametor —a peninsula of precipices—where now the new lighthouse stands, and the opposite cliffs, all was so shut in and so steep that one was puzzled to know how one could get up to the roof of the island. We put off in a boat to the beach, for there is no proper ship-landing, and there we were met by a whiff of warm, perfumed air, smelling of sun-heated bracken—an air that hardly belonged to this pirate-cove, where everything ought to reek of tar and sea-salt. From this cove it is a sultry climb in the June sun, and one is glad to leave the wearisome road at the first chance and zigzag off by a hanging by-path, which makes a short cut to Marisco's Castle. The present lord of Lundy, the Rev. Mr. Heaven, has a much more sheltered stronghold in a cwm lying at the first angle inland above the Lametor Cove.

As for Marisco, there is no space here to tell half his story—with a suspected murder of his in a London street to begin it. It is enough that, flying from justice or injustice, he took refuge in Lundy. We have already heard of him at Margam, whose abbot got into trouble for sheltering him and giving him sanctuary there. Matthew Paris gives us the best picture of him, and relates how he took up his eyrie here in a place inexpugnable, and being *exlex* and King's traitor, proceeded to live *more pyratico*. William de Marisco had, indeed, seen a good deal of castle-building in Ireland (where his father, Geoffrey, built the castles of Killaloe and Ballyleague), and the plain square keep of the Castle—all that is left of it—which he built to be his stronghold on Lundy, still shows

how good a builder he could be. To-day you open a door in the thick wall of the keep, to feel bewildered at what it discovers. For the interior is filled with three or four small whitewashed cottages, which make it into a snug alley, just such as you may see in the heart of some crowded city. Step outside the door again, and sea and sky, and the lonely island hung between them, are all your world. Marisco was the right, rare spirit to harbour here, and live by the strong hand. He raided the ships that sailed up the Sea of Severn, and all the neighbouring coasts from Bideford on the one side to Porthkerry and Aberthaw on the other. His name grew to smell of fire and blood; he was so strong in his island that none dared attack him. But then, the King pressing for his capture, some of the men of Devon and Glamorgan seem to have combined, and by a ruse effected what they could not do by open assault. Paris tells us of the strategy; but does not say what it was. Anyhow, he was taken, carried to London, and there died, says Paris, not one but many horrible deaths—a statement which sufficiently hints at the hideous ignominies his dead body was made to suffer.

At his trial not only his piracy on the British coasts and the high seas (which he admitted), and the murder of the Irish messenger in the London streets (which he stoutly denied), were charged against him; but he was accused of high treason of a more heinous kind. Two or three years before this a certain fantastic esquire had found his way, it seems, to Woodstock, when the Court was there, and, feigning madness, entered the King's bedchamber by the window, carrying "a naked knife." Luckily one of the Queen's maids, Margaret Biseth by name, was a *devote*, and was singing psalms by

the light of a candle, and she spied this unhallowed fly-by-night, and gave the alarm. He was taken, said he was a paid assassin, and *William Marisco his master!* There seems to have been nothing to prove his story true; but any stick is good enough to hit a pirate. So the unhappy lord and king of Lundy was sentenced to death, and many of his desperate heroes along with him. He was hung, says Paris sententiously, on that penal machine called vulgarly a gibbet, and his body dishonoured, disembowelled, and quartered. Last sign of his ill-fame, the four quarters were sent to four chief cities of the realm as a warning. And so Marisco the Pirate became a reproach in York and a ballad-singer's theme as far away as the Borders. He died—his chronicler wrote—not in grace, but after a manner which sounds like an imaginative rendering of a doom after death, wrought by many tortures.

One of the caves used for hiding loot—"Benson's Cave" it is called—lies close below the Castle. Benson was a much later islander than Marisco—a humorous villain who, pretending to ship convicts oversea, landed them here, stored his ship's cargo in this cave, scuttled his ship, and by this and kindred methods was rapidly amassing a huge fortune, when the authorities harshly interfered. He escaped abroad then, and died, no doubt, a happy death. But Bideford, where he was born, makes little of his memory.

There are other caves in Marisco's Isle, just as satisfying to one's appetite for pirates and buccaneers. There is the Devil's Kitchen, in which the arch-enemy is sometimes seen in the shape of a bull-seal, who can, when he leaves its shelter, throw stones like any Christian boy.

Best or worst of all, there is that uneasy chasm —the Devil's Limekiln—over against the jags and crags at the south-west corner of the island. On a dry day in a dry season you had needs take care how you clamber down to its verge. It is as ill a place as you could wish to stare into, and the Shutter Rock is its ominous offspring. It would, if you could replace it in the Limekiln cavity (whence, they say, the Evil One first took it), exactly fit it. You need a good boatman if you would explore the Limekiln cliffs and the sea-caves from the sea. But for a perfect cave adventure you must boat at low tide to the north end of the island. There lies a superb seal-cave with three entrances, into which your boat can carry you. It is a magic cave, too; for its dimensions vary according to every explorer and I prefer not to give any.

If, however, being a day excursionist from Ilfracombe, you explore this end of the island and boat round the "Hen and Chickens," and penetrate this triple cave, you will assuredly lose your return steamer home, and so be left at the mercy of the uncanny, sudden fogs, and the tricky, shifting winds that often help to cut off the island from the mainland. It is a simpler matter to know the inhabited human end of Lundy, where its squire and his small tenantry are quartered. A country house in a cwm, with a garden below; a new church on the high ground, clean-walled, erect, alert, like a light-house or an architect's drawing; three or four cottages, and a manor farm, where you can stay; these are almost all the human furniture. Bleak as is the island, small herbs abound there, and blossom long before those of the mainland.

Purple ling is in bloom early in June, far ahead of its season, but the universal carpet of the sea-links is lady's slipper—an innocent herb for a pirate's foot to tread. Seapink, blue scabious, and many flowering lichens abound, too; and above them, like snippets of sky, the blue fritillaries are busy, flying over the slopes, and reminding us that though Lundy is nearer Devonshire than Glamorganshire, its wild flowers and its other creatures all take after those on the Welsh side of the Channel. Add to this that Lundy has the peregrine falcon, the great cormorant and sea-pie among its birds, and that on the Lametor and Rat Island adjoining is one of the last refuges of the true black rat—the brown rat having appropriated the main island.

Another race of creatures, more elusive than the black rat, may be believed in or not, as you like, in Lundy. The Welsh name for the place was once "Ynys Wair," Isle of Gwair, and in a poem in the *Book of Taliesin* we read of the prison of Gwair in Caer Sidi. The combination of names has led Sir John Rhys to the conjecture that it was, or may have been, in Lundy itself that Caer Sidi and "Carchar Gwair" were situate. Two mysterious accounts of the Caer of the Sidi, or faery fort, are to be found in the same book, in the xivth and in the xxxth poem. The former says of it:—

"Seemly is my seat in Caer Sidi:
Neither age nor plague for him that liveth there;
As Manawyddan and Pryderi know,
Three organs play before the fire there:
And around its corners the ocean currents go."

This brings up the idea again of the Isle of

Youth, the Emain or Avalon, that haunted the Celtic imagination late and early. Had the unlucky Edward II., when he thought of flying there in his last hurried escape along the Welsh coast, heard in Gwent something of its old repute as a refuge for unhappy souls and outlaws—"the impregnable isle" as Walsingham calls it?

He never reached its haven, it is certain, drifting instead to his fate, to be captured near Llantrisant. I saw none of the Sidh or fairy folk, at Lundy, nor did I spy a seal. But I am sorry to say I did see a seal-gun on its rack in the island inn; for surely it is a grand mistake to shoot seals at all, now that they are growing scarcer year by year on the British coasts. To see a seal dive in a sea gully on the west coast of Pirate's Isle must be a sight to remember. There the boulders, that are dun or grey out of the water, look when seen within its clear depth of a true mermaid colour; they look now like mermaids, now uncannily like so many naked, drowned men. It is not hard to understand, if one sits (as Kingsley made Amyas Leigh sit in his blindness) against the Gull Rock, and sees thence the rocks and the weeds "beneath the merry blue sea," how he came by that episode. Indeed, for romance and lost galleons and buried hoards of "pieces-of-eight," no Indian isle can beat Lundy—that rib of granite which lies snug but deadly in the Sea of Severn; a harbour of refuge or a shipbreaker, according to which side you take of it.

We reached Lundy, as I have told, in a hot sun; we left its pirate cove in a cold rain, to the first mutterings of a nasty wind in the

Lametor crags. We had not sailed above three or four furlongs before Marisco's Isle had disappeared; and we got back home that evening and saw the gas-lamps lit in the street, with a sense of having been in a place just a little over the world's rim.

Photo by] [*Williams & Curnuck, Newport, Mon.*

THE MUMBLES HEAD.

CHAPTER XVII

THE EAST GOWER COAST—THE MUMBLES, OSTREMUERE AND PENNARD—MORGAN, QUEEN OF THE LAND OF GORE—"DRABA AIZOIDES"

> "I am the Queen Morgan le Fay,
> queen of the land of Gore."
> "MORTE D'ARTHUR."

LEAVING the last of the Swansea suburbs at Sketty, and then striking across Clyne Moor for Bishopston, or taking the more usual route by the lazy Mumbles railway, you will find a change of entertainment in the land of Gore. There is a choice of castles, to say nothing of the Bone Caves and smugglers' "runs," the endless creeks or "slades," and the cliff architecture above them.

Oystermouth Castle, better than the fragments of Swansea, recalls the hold of the castle-builders in the country. Apparently the first of the string of Gower fortresses tied to Swansea Castle, "Ostremuere" afterwards became more important than Abertawe. As you see it now, you see it much altered from its original state. The first castle was burnt in the eighteenth century, when the present one was built in its place. Hence, the ornamental character of some of the windows, which in one instance, that in the chapel, show fine tracery, of a convolute pattern (restored

some thirty years ago). The Castle is apparently eccentric in design, but well adapted to its site and polygonal in form, with no show of sentinel-towers beyond the gate-tower and the keep. The keep is the only part of the original castle now remaining. As you enter the gate, and regarrison the place in your record, one castellan stands out clearly, and it is the figure again of William de Braos, "Breuse sance Pité." Having already twenty castles and more at his back, he made "Ostremuere" his dungeons-in-chief, where he cast those contumacious Welsh and other troublesome neighbours who did not subscribe to his plans, or help to feed his house and estate. At the opening of the fourteenth century he was a multiple Lord Marcher and castle-owner, whose powers were so superlative that at last they intoxicated him. He held in all some fifty-nine lordships, and King John in the early years of his reign gave to him the whole of Gower, on terms of only one knight's service. His wife, Maude de Haia, was a fit mate for him. While he passed as a symbol of cruelty, murder, and rapine into the later Arthurian tales, she became in Welsh folk-lore a gorgeous witch, a Morgan le Fay, a giant-woman of giant strength. She was overwhelmingly haughty in her bearing; without any woman's weakness; physically without fear. Their children were of the same build with themselves, and had the same Norman grip, in accordance with the couplet—

> "Les Normains ont les mains crochus;
> C'est le mieux ramasser tout."
>
> (The Normans have the hands crook'd so,
> The better to clutch all, you know.)

But enough has been said of the De Braoses already. Another witch-woman, her fellow-enchantress, who still enchants and tantalises one here on the threshold of Gower, is the old Queen of Gore. There are more regions of Morgan le Fay than one, but it is as certain as anything in romance that Gower is their Welsh original. The "land of Gore" suggests a land of witches, approached as it is through a valley of desolation, the dreadful valley of Landore (which Morgan le Fay might easily have devised and set there by black-magic as a barrier to her dominions). It is strange that King Mark in his rage against Tristan and his cousin Alisander should have sent to Morgan le Fay and another queen, "praying that they two sorceresses would set all the country in fire with ladies that were enchantresses" and dangerous knights like Malgrin and Breuse sance Pité, for the reek of that fire still hangs dreadfully over Landore.

But at the Mumbles you have left the copper-smoke far behind. The time to climb the Mumbles Hill is late on a summer evening, when the tide is full and the sun westering. But by broad moonlight on a clear night the bay looks just as fair: if the sea-surroundings are not so distinct, the furnace-glow on the left is mysterious to see. Seen by day, the view ranges along the Glamorgan coast, beginning with the superb curve of Swansea Bay, and traversing the mouths of the rivers Tawe and Neath, and scanning the smoke-cloud of Swansea town and the dolorous valley of Landore. Past Port Talbot, the view just skirts the sands of Kenfig, with Porthcawl and Nash Point all but lost to view in the coast perspective; over the Channel the heights of Exmoor

and, further east, the Quantocks are visible. Nearer home, on the other hand, some familiar points of the Gower coast are quite hidden, while others stand out and look as if they were within a stone's throw. This is, to adopt a triad, one of the Three great vistas of this southern coast.

One uncertain April morning I started with Mercury from Oystermouth to Pennard Castle. A pelting shower on the first steep hill drove us under the ivy of a high wall for shelter; the rest was all bright windy weather, with blue and white skies, and dry, white roads such as you get in limestone country.

Outside Norton, we overtook a big herd-lad driving the proverbial three cows. They were three sisters; the first eight, the second seven, the third six years old: sleek, brown and dun animals, Alderney and Shorthorn crossed. The lad was fond of the creatures, and proud of their cross-bred qualities. "They were good milkers, or fairly good," he said, much better than your pure Alderneys. "An Alderney is not worth her salt" was a common saying among the Gower farmers.

Next we dropt into the deep valley of Bishopston, and went to see the church. The churchyard looked still enough as we went in; still as graves can be. But suddenly, from near the wall and behind a gravestone, out sprang a boy; then another and another, till quite a troop of them went whooping by in some boyish panic. It was like a sudden resurrection of imps from the graves.

The church was rather rude, but of true country character: a nave with chancel several feet higher giving a certain charm of the unexpected to it, as different pitches do. It was full of exquisitely

arranged growing plants, small palms, and tropical flowers with white, purple, and pale red blooms—the whole kept with extreme care. Evidently a good spirit was in attendance. The church would have tempted the most restless wanderer in, to give himself up to human hopes and holy fears for a breathing space.

This experience was so good that it tempted another halt at the next church—Pennard. A still simpler building, it had chosen a hermit's site under a fir-wood, in a curiously isolated place. I left Mercury at the gate, my coat and wallet and gloves strapp'd on the carrier. Inside I found a carved pulpit, and stayed to sketch a dragon thrice repeated on the upper panels, rudely but well designed—a sort of dragon trailant. The beast, I am sorry to say, proved actively malevolent. When I went out again Mercury was there, but wallet and gloves were clean gone. The roads, the landscape, the trees, gave no sign. It was clearly the dragon's doing. Much exercised at this black-magic, I went on my way smiling Malvolio-like smiles and gently objurgating.

No village of Pennard appeared. No doubt the dragon had used his arts upon it too. I took lunch—home-made bread, Gower cheese, and good ale—at a small inn in Park Mill. Pennard Castle lies a mile away down a curious sand-valley. Having climbed up from the cwm and filled one's shoes with loose sand in doing so, one was inclined to make much of the extreme solitariness of the Castle and the desolation of the sunned courts with the sand silted deep on the floors. However, in emerging from the Castle, I saw the white stubs of a golf course. Near by, two small children were rolling down a sandhill and shrieking with impish

delight, while, regardless of the noise and all outer things, a lady lay couched against a green knoll writing—no doubt a romance of the Castle—writing as if for dear life.

This unexpected apparition had to serve in place of the ancient ghost of Pennard Castle, whom the golf players have no doubt driven away now for good. The "Gwrach y Rhibyn" it was who used to haunt the walls, and she even resented any impertinent visitor, especially after dark. One such there was who went there by night in her despite, and failed to reach home. Next day they found him bruised, scratched, and bleeding, his hair matted with sand and blood. He said the G'rach had pounced on him like an eagle, and pecked him with her beak, and scratched him with her long bird-like talons. One detail, that she smelt like a "bucket o' tar," sounds bad. Since then she has had the Castle of a night to herself.

Pennard has a better and more authentic folk-tale than this, however. Once, on the night of the wedding feast of its Welsh chief and castellan, who had carried back a rich bride from the North after fighting there for her father, the watchman heard an unusual humming and soft shrilling within the walls. He grew uneasy as he listened, and then called the porter out from behind the great door. He, too, heard the uncanny sound. Together they went into the yard, and saw there in the moon-dazzle a troop of the Tylwyth Teg, or Fair Family, dancing and singing. Full of amaze, they ran back to tell the bridegroom of the sight. But he fell into a rage, and swore he would have no "coblynau" (goblins) in his castle, and finally rushed out into the moonlight and attacked the moon-beams as Cuchulain fought the waves—in default

Photo by] [*Williams & Curnuck, Newport, Mon.*

OYSTERMOUTH CASTLE.

of the small folk, who had all disappeared. But they took their fairy revenge all the same. A voice like the wind rising cried, "y dyn heb groesaw. Bydd heb gastell, heb giniaw"—that is, "The man without welcome. He shall be without castle or wedding feast!" Even as the voice died away the wind rose and blew the sand up in such clouds that it smothered the Castle, covered the wedding feast like snow, and drove the people out homeless.

Pennard Castle, however, is one of the few castles that are traditionally of faery origin; which in Wales generally means that the site was that of a British Caer before it came into the hands of the later castle-builders. The tradition, which seems contrary to the above story, is that it was, like Hay Castle, built in a single night; some say by the Tylwyth Teg, some by a Welsh Fferyll (Virgil, *i.e.*, a wizard), who did it to save his life. The Normans had taken him prisoner after a Welsh raid, and gave him the choice either of building up the Castle in a night or dying in the morning. In the morning it was built. It was apparently as a faery fort—a haunted "rath," to use the Irish word—that Pennard first got its uncanny name.

For botanists, it is haunted by a rare creature, too—the shade of *Draba aizoides*. Some of the guide-books confidently say this rare plant grows on the walls. If ever it did, it does so no longer. It does grow in Gower, but it needs a cliff climber to get it.

On the return journey from Pennard we were rapidly descending a lane north of Bishopston valley, when we overtook two young men with tin botany cases strapped on their shoulders. Within

those tin tubes I saw, as plainly as if the covering had been of glass, the covetable small leaves of *Draba aizoides*. We pulled up abreast of the two wayfarers, and asked boldly and all short if they had been in quest of her. They smiled ingenuously in Scotch, and said Yes. The elder and taller of the two showed me fresh scratches and skin-wounds on his hands, and then opened his case. Most generously he bestowed a sprig of the delicate Gower Draba on me. A later drawing of the leaves is too rough to be given here.

Draba aizoides is the yellow Alpine whitlow-grass, and though it was now only mid-April the yellow flowers were just past their prime, and some had already faded to brown. The leaves (to quote the Rev. C. A. Johns) are "narrow, pointed, rigid, glossy, keeled and fringed." Its cousin, *Draba verna*, the vernal whitlow-grass, is more common, and flowers as early as the lesser celandine. They belong to the Cruciferæ. Another "Draba," the Rock whitlow-grass, grows on the highest of the Highland mountain-rocks. I think one of the two botanists said he had gathered this, too, on Ben Nevis. They had only a week's holiday, and had come all the way from Edinburgh to look for such treasure-trove in Devonshire and South Wales; and they spoke with infectious enthusiasm of their adventure.

At Park Mill may be found—where precisely it would not be right to disclose—the Hairy Cress, *Arabis hirsuta*, another of the cruciform herbs. On the sands in the neighbourhood, too, may be seen the Sea Stork's Bill—*Erodium maritimum*—and other sand-loving plants. The Sea Stork's Bill has spiral seed-caps which untwist in the rain, and can jump like a frog. *Hordeum maritimum* is some-

thing seen too, but more and more rarely. The *Osmunda regalis* was to be seen a few summers ago, growing wild in the marshes of Western Gower. The Meadow Clary, one of the sages, is another uncommon plant found in the peninsula, which is not usually thought a native of Wales.

THE MALEVOLENT DRAGON: PENNARD CHURCH (p. 187).

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GOWER CAVES—THE "RED LADY OF PAVILAND"—GOODWICK AND PENRICE—ARTHUR'S STONE—WORM'S HEAD—WEOBLEY CASTLE AND THE LASS OF PENCLAWDD

WITHIN reach on foot from Oystermouth, and stretching along the whole south coast of Gower, beginning at Bacon Hole—suggestive name—you have two series of caves to explore, some of which represent the earliest kind of cliff-castle known in Britain. But for the sake of the adventure, you ought to follow the coast round Pwll Du, and see the camp above.

If you have come from Caswell Bay, you have already passed Brandy Cove, and crossed the end of the Bishopston valley, up which the smugglers used to "run" their brandy-wine and other goods and now a famous objective, because of its extreme picturesqueness, for Gower picnickers and holiday-makers. The way up the valley, from the Beaufort Arms, and this side of High Pennard, after crossing the stream, lies under Pwll Du Wood. So along the stream, when there is any stream; and when it is lost to sight, along its dry overflow flood course, which serves as a rough road. I have already spoken of Bishopston Church, but might have added that its old Welsh

name is Llandeilo-Verwalt, and that the Rev. Edward Davies, author of *Celtic Researches* and the *Mystery of the Ancient Britons*, was rector of the parish, and lies buried in the churchyard. As the Welsh name shows, the church is another of the series in South Wales dedicated to St. Teilo.

The next point westward after the cove or cwm at the opening of the valley is High Pennard, whose name and that of its fellow Pennard further on may remind you of two other Pennards, East and West, across the Channel in the heart of Somerset and the Vale of Avalon. A very different sea-shore is this to that at the foot of the vale where the Somerset Pennards lie. Here you have Pwll Du Head, where you ought to explore the old camp on its west side, to end the blind peninsula; and going west you reach the farm in the dip at Dipslade, close to which lies the great bone cave of *Bacon Hole*, to which a farm-track and foot-path lead. The cave, now that it has given up its bones, need hardly tempt the antiquarian to descend the cliff to its mouth. The cave is pitched in a natural "fault," causing a fissure in the lime-stone. The first question that arises about the bones is how and why they were brought there? Were some of them the remains of the feasts of the carnivorous, and possibly cannibal, prehistoric cave-men who lived on these shores, long before the first Celt left his home in the east? Cannibal, it ought only to be said under protest. Some later discoveries, as in the Croatian Bone Cave, near Agram, whose situation on the sand-stone cliff sixty feet above the Krapina River is very like this, hint at a more terrible kind of ogre in the old days, with powerful jaws, who ate some-

times rhinoceros steaks, sometimes his fellow-beings. There are hearths in the Krapina Cave to show on how gruesome and vast a scale his cookery was. Who can tell us what scenes went on in Bacon and Minchin Holes? Only aborigines like the "Red Lady of Paviland."

In the time of the Press-Gangs the more secure of these caves were used by the men of the neighbourhood as hiding-places, the women-folk bringing provisions when they could. Between High Pennard and Pennard Burrows, just below the Castle visited yesterday, lie three more caves, of which Minchin Hole and Fox Hole are worth a visit. Minchin Hole is a palatial hole, comparatively: high and wide, nearly opposite the rocks of Sir Christopher's Knowl; and Bosco's Den and Bowen's Parlour, or the Devil's Hole, have smugglers' tales to tell, as well as their prehistoric dead to give up. A comparatively recent romancer has refurnished these Parlours, and called their hero back to life under the name of Rounce the Smuggler. *

Another four miles' tramping past Penmaen, along the Gower backbone, Cefn y Bryn, and one reaches, on the northern side of the "cefn," first a Holy Well, of which Morgan le Fay might have been the guardian, and then the big cromlech—Arthur's Stone, where the Gower pilgrimage often ends.

It is easy to miss it on that stone-strewn reach of high moorland, on which you can trace, as at Stonehenge, the alignment of a great open-air temple whose sun-determined lines and spaces are witness of its architecture. Indeed, as you stand there and look around you, you begin to realise that the place was one where the earth's relation to the

* See *The Man at Odds: A Romance of the Severn Sea.*

stars and to the elements was destined to appeal at once, as at Carnac and Salisbury Plain, to those astronomical builders and starry masons.

As for the cromlech or dolmen, St. David, tradition says, split this stone with a sword to show "it was not sacred, as the Druids held." Llanddewi—the Llan or church-close of David—about two miles south-west, gives just a tinge of local reality to this tale. Camden, more matter-of-fact, says that pieces were broken off to make into millstones; and this may serve to remind one that the stone is really of pudding-stone, or red sandstone conglomerate. Others will say, perhaps, that since this is a burial-place, it might be another of the High King's seven fabled sleeping-places; that here Morgan le Fay, or the Queen of Gore, brought him by art-magic after the "last dread battle"; and that here he lies, waiting for his waking day. Before it was known as Arthur's Stone, however, the cromlech was called, after St. Ketti, "Maen Ceti," which is recalled by the proverb, "mal llwyth maen Ceti"—like the load of Ketty's Stone, spoken of any particularly heavy burden.

One last uncanny peculiarity of the huge capstone must be told. Once a year, on Christmas Eve, it leaves its place in the dolmen and goes down to the sea to drink, and woe to the wight that sees it at that office.

The view from Cefn Bryn, near and above the stone, is entrancing and one to further every idea of the ancient sacredness of the place. It only remains to go on to Worm's Head, and there sit an hour, if it is not too windy a day, perched on its extraordinary sea-perch looking westward, to understand why the land of Gower required a

water-witch for queen, and why it became an enchanted province in Arthuria.

One February day—it must be twenty years ago —I and a friend, a Welsh namesake of the poet Dryden, went to Worm's Head when a furious westerly gale was blowing. We had fairly to creep on hands and knees along the neck leading to it, such was the force of the wind, and we expected to find the Head itself quite untenable. To our surprise, the air proved instead to be comparatively still on the furthest and highest brink. There we sat in great peace and comfort while the wind raged below us and vexed the waves and buffeted the sea-birds, including one black-backed gull who seemed intent on getting into the bottom ledges.

From Worm's Head it is roughly a league back along the coast to Yellow Top and the Paviland Caves, where Dr. Buckland came upon the prehistoric "Red Lady of Paviland"—red because of the red-iron stain on her poor bones. We might, adopting the old manner of the Triads, say that the three famous ladies of the land of Gore were Maud de Haia, Morgan le Fay, and the "Red Lady of Paviland."

Three old British (?) camps are to be easily traced out on the cliffs between Worm's Head and Port Eynon. At Port Eynon, once a notorious smugglers' centre, now a sandy watering-place where a folk-lore collector has lately found some good material, you are close to Oxwich Castle and Oxwich Bay. You might have crossed from Pennard Castle here on your way west, for at low tide you can get round to Oxwich Castle from the Park Mill outlet by the sands, saving a long circuit.

Oxwich has a desperate old feud of the Mansels

and Herberts wrapped up in its chronicle. The dispute rose over a French vessel wrecked on the coast on St. Stephen's Day, December 26, 1557, which was laden with wool, figs, and raisins. The Mansel wreckers had evidently been prompt in rifling the ship, and had carried off much of the booty to houses in "Oxwick." Getting wind of it, Sir George Herbert of Swansea, who claimed the wreck as his, arrived hotfoot at the village with his retainers. They went to several houses and dragged out the booty that had been stored there and carried it to the church. Then they went in force to the Castle, and at the gate were met by Sir Rice's son, Edward, who had been away, possibly to get help. A fight followed, in which Edward was hurt in the arm. With the defending party was an old lady, a woman of great spirit, Mistress Anne Mansel of Landewy, Edward's aunt, who had returned with him to the Castle on horseback. She appears in white ruff and brown redingote, as the Welsh gentlewoman of that day. She had already encountered Sir George on the highway, and bade him not go "to the said mansion house against the said Edward, or contend with him for such *pylfery goods!*"

"It is not for that," Sir George replied. "Your nephew has abused my servants, as good gentlemen as Edward himself, whom I will teach to know the worst servant in my house."

Thereupon they rode on to the gate, where they were met in force. Old Mistress Mansel there dismounted, and went on into the gateway. Her horse, after a first brush between the two parties, was put athwart the gate, as a temporary barrier, while she herself stood two or three yards behind the supporters of young Mansel. He, says one

witness, "stapped one stepe furth of the gate, when he saw the others advance, and struck at William Herbert." "One of Edward Mansel's men had a gleyve staff, and the others swerdes." Mistress Mansel seemed to try to persuade her nephew to be placable, and "wold have pushed him in at the gate."

"I pray you, good Cosin, get you in!" she said.

But his blood was up and his sword out, and the old lady of Llandewy had to stand aside. She had paused behind him, only two or three yards away, when one of the siegers, Watkin John ap Watkin, transferring his sword to his left hand, picked up a big stone in his right, and threw it. Evidently intended for those his sword could not reach, it struck the old gentlewoman full on the forehead, and she fell to the ground.

"Upon the strykinge downe of the said Anne Manxell, they within the gate cryed owte 'Murdder, murdder.' Upon whyche throwe and crye, the said Sr. G. H. called his men away."

Another witness deposed that Sir George Herbert "before the fraye, brag'd that he wold bynd the said Ed. Maunsel like a boye and send him to his father like a cocke."

Star Chamber proceedings followed, and Sir George Herbert had to pay heavy fines and damages both to the Crown and to the Mansels. The deed of inquest held on the body of the old lady says the mortal wound was of the breadth of two thumbs and the depth—"even to the brain," though the stone was of "no great bigness."

Oxwich Castle was occupied by Mansels till 1658. Then it was let to Mr. Francis Bevan, whose descendants still farm the land. The Mansels get

their name from Mans, as you discover in the "Roman de Rou":—

> "E par consence des Mansels
> Helies e Mans s'embati
> E cil del Mans l'unt recoilli."

The most famous of the family was Sir John Mansel, Lord Chancellor, Lord Chief Justice of England, Keeper of the Great Seal, Prior of Beverley, Treasurer of York, and the friend ("in this world and in the world to come") of Henry III.

The sea has won a long tide's reach on the land almost within living memory. A print to be seen at Swansea Library shows one evidence of it in the vanished old parsonage house, Oxwich, washed away by the sea, about 1805. It stood between the church and the tide-line, which has now crept up to the churchyard.

Penrice Castle only lies a mile nor'-west of Oxwich; and after Ostremuere it was the "maist strongest" hold in Gower. Penrice is Pen Rhys, and hither drew to a hold Rhys, the unlucky grandson of Iestyn ab Gwrgant. He was soon overtaken by the Norman flood, with Henry de Beaumont in the van; and Rhys was beheaded. The present Castle was built and added to at various times, and became one of the wonders of Gower. The place now impresses one as overlaid with immemorial layers of antiquity. Another newer house has grown up under the shelter of the old, just as new trees have sprung from the old, still standing side by side in the old park and by its sleepy wild-duck pond. With one fellow-traveller I passed it one gusty winter afternoon

in 1889; with another, M. A. R., in broad, rich summer, twenty years later. In both seasons, it breathed the rich, double-distilled antique aroma of the house upon house, the patrimony upon patrimony, that have warmed generations of comfortable heirs and well-endowed dames. On the last occasion we were not surprised, I remember, to find at the King Arthur Inn at Reynoldston a welcome waiting us, with tea above a walled garden and rose-petals falling into our teacups.

West of Cefn Bryn, the cairns on Rhosilly Downs and Llanmadoc Hill are the best vantage-grounds from which to survey the coast-line. There are three standing stones in a field, a mile west of Reynoldston, which you can visit on the way to Llangennydd and Llanmadoc. And south of Reynoldston lies "Stout Hall," whose owner, Colonel Wood, unearthed one of the great bone-caves.

The history of Llangennydd and Llanmadoc parishes have been written with affectionate fullness by a quondam rector, the Rev. J. D. Davies. His death alone prevented his completing his work as local chronicler in detail of all Gower. He tells in its pages the strange story of the wreck, without any gale or storm to engender it, in January, 1868, of sixteen vessels in Broughton Bay. Eighteen or nineteen sail were outward bound, vessels from 80–400 tons burden. There was a tricky ground-sea, not noticed particularly till they reached Whitford Lighthouse. Here one or two anchored; the others having been let go by the pilot-tug hoped to clear Burry Holms with the help of the ebb tides, and make a good offing. Only one or two did so. The floodtide set in; the wind died away; and some sixteen of them drifted back,

some dashing against the rocks, some against each other. A few sank in mid-river, having their bottoms knocked out by thumping on the sand; for the swell was so heavy that at one moment a boat would be atop a wave, and then be swept down, thud, on the bottom. A pilot ship, the *Hulk*, was in the Bay, and a few men escaped to her by boat; and stayed there till day. Next morning there was great grief. The disaster happened between nine and ten at night, and no one in the village knew of it, but at daylight the shore was seen to be covered from Whitford Sker to Burry Holms with seamen's clothes, broken spars, hulls of vessels, ropes, and large strewage of coal. The drowned sailors were buried, as they came ashore, in various churchyards of this coast.

On that ill-starred night the choir was at practice in Llanmadoc Church when suddenly an indescribable cry of terror was heard in the churchyard, as of some one in mortal fear. "I ran out," said Mr. Davies, the rector, "to see what it was, and saw a young lad standing there, his face distorted with fright. He said he had seen a man without his hat come and look in through the window. The boy, being taken into the church, was some time in coming to himself. It was believed that what he saw was the ghost of one of the drowned men, as this was the very hour of the wrecks."

Working back along the North-Gower coast, you have leagues of sandy wastes on your left hand as you approach Weobley Castle. The guide-books will tell you what a dull, melancholy region it is. For myself, I can only say that on a hazy spring day the effect of the yellow sand merging in the

pale milky white water of the Burry Inlet had a charm of its own. The long sand-spit of Whiteford Barrows looked neither like earth nor sea in the shimmering April grisaille ; it suggested an isle of apparitions, an unconditioned peninsula, where "the waters wap" and the waves are wan.

Weobley Castle has a dead kernel within its shell : a farm-house which seems to have crept into it for shelter, and there died for want of light, overwhelmed by the Castle spirit. The farmer was the last of a great line of lords and castellans. Harry Beaumont, says the "Brut," was the first Norman to seize on the place. He built a rude castle of sorts here, having thrown out the sons of Caradoc ap Iestyn, at the time of his building of Swansea, Llychwr, and Penrhys (where Rhys of Caradoc lost his head). But fifty years later, in 1150, another Rhys came and his brother Meredydd with him, and took the Castle and burnt it. And in 1215, yet another, Rhys Ieuanc, young Rhys, after taking Kidwelly and Carnwillian, took all the Gower castles one after another. Leland speaks of the de la Meres at Weobley, but he is confusing them with the house of Sir John de la Bere.

Llanrhidian, finely posted on the rise above the marsh, impresses you as you enter it from below with an air of untold antiquity, supported by the two Druidic-looking stones, one of them a Maen Hir, near the approach to the church.

I asked a farm lad, who was leading a frisky yearling to water, what the stones were for.

"Well, I've heard tell the Romans used to whip their slaves at one of them," he said, "and you could see where the stapple was."

Clearly enough, the stones had been coupled as

they now stand within recent times; but there is always a fragment of real history behind these village fables; and Llanrhidian is steeped in the quadruple dye, British, Roman, Welsh, and Norman, of popular tradition.

In the churchyard also lie two separate stones, which since the church was once dedicated to St. Illtyd serve to urge the old question about the number of Illtyd churches that pass under other names. On the high ground above is an old camp, "Cil Ivor," where Ivor ab Cadivor entrenched himself in the year 1110.

At high tides the road across Llanrhidian marsh to Llanmorlais is covered. It looked to me, when I crossed it, as if it were never thoroughly dry. Old cockleshell mounds and tidal posts afford the only break in the long salt-flats. The sheep that feed there seem unusually motionless from sympathy with the scene. Except for an occasional bleat, a railway whistle across at Llwchwr, or the whistle of snipe, the silence is melancholily complete.

A famous City of Cockles lies two miles north of Llanrhidian-Penclawdd. One day, how long ago it need not be told, I reached its rambling street, that looked as if it would wander off into the sea-waste, with Davy for guide; and we learnt from an old standard smoking by the low sea-wall that the "works" were idle and the place was out of luck.

"There would be no living," he said, "at Penclawdd save for the Cocos!" He pointed to a cottage. "That house there; eight, *ië wir*, it has eight in it, and John he hasn't done a stroke these months!"

A little later, and we saw the straggling troop

of cockle-women, seven or eight of them, the tired wage-earners, returning bare-legged with their cockles over the sandy causeway. The eldest of them was a woman of about sixty, with an anxious, much-weathered, whimsical brown visage under her cap. The youngest was one of the comeliest, merriest-faced young girls ever seen. Her bare wet feet, flecked with seaweed, gleamed in the sun like soft ivory as she halted there. She dropped her load for a moment on the sandy wall, with a curious gesture as of part relief from the weight, part pride in the "take" of cockles.

That afternoon was spent in exploring the North Gower stretches and hunting with Davy for "old sto-äns!" But in the evening we returned to take train at Llanmorlais. The next station was Penclawdd, and looking out of the window, he directed me to a small group on the platform. It was the younger part of the very troop of cockle-pickers we had seen in the morning by the strand. They were mightily changed now, tricked out in their best, and one or two in high colours; and the contrast they made with the brown bags of cockles, over which they mounted guard on a porter's truck, was queer enough. But one of them, whose back was turned to us, wore a plain grey gown and dark jacket. It was not until the cockle-packs in bags were being hoisted into the van that we saw her face. The other girls carelessly stood by, and let the porters do the work. But she, seeing that time pressed, seized her own bag with a look of indescribable pride in the grotesque oozy thing, as much as to say, "You are mine and of my getting, and you are worth silver, Cocos fach!"

As the train moved out she stood gazing after

it like a lover after her beloved, and her smile, lighting up her eyes in the station gloom, seemed to make her face luminous against the shadows. Then we realised we had had in this vanishing apparition of the lass of Penclawdd a glimpse of one of those faces that, once seen, whether against a railway hoarding or a salt-marsh, are because of their gleaming lines—conductors of some inner radiance—stamped on the eye of a mortal man for ever.

OLD OYSTER-SHELL LAMP, GOWER COAST.

CHAPTER XIX

BURRY INLET AND CARMARTHEN BAY — CASTELL LLYCHWR — CWRT-Y-CARNAU — THE GREAT BOAR HUNT IN AMMAN VALE

Amongst the minor lazy sensations of the Welsh coast that help a man to realise without effort the enormous pushing and dilating force of its spring-tides, must be counted that of standing on Loughor or Llychwr Bridge, and watching the salt water pour in from the Burry Inlet. It comes in there at a swimming pace, deep ochre or light brown in colour, covered with patches of seething froth; and the timbers and piers are so built as to give the eye due pleasure in matching the resistant baulks and timber structure against the brimming element.

The river Llychwr, that swallows the salt tide there, is not a long one, and its tidal reach is brief, but it is a stream worth exploring to its source, where it flows clean out of the rock at Llygad Llychwr, the "Eye of Loughor."

Some of the intervening reaches are spoilt now by the wilful ugliness of the industrial communities—mean streets, buildings without decency, and poverty, or the next thing to it, made prim in a kind of dreadful workhouse uniform of fire-brick facings and mortar. But leave these, the common

affliction of many of the fairest Welsh valleys, and you escape again into the verdure and pastoral extents that make the upper Llwchwr lands pleasant in the gaze of Heaven.

The village or town of Llychwr, for the place had borough rights and a portreeve and burgesses with coats to their backs, has a curious name in Welsh tradition — Tre Avanc — Beaver's Town. Hence, say the up-town gossips, the place used to be called by way of derision "Trewanc." It figures in the Roman map as "Leucrum or Leucarum," the last big halt in the road before Maridunum, or Carmarthen. The Castle is another of those reared on a three or four-times occupied site. The Britons used the castle-tump originally; when the Normans came, Henry Beaumont, the first great Gower advener, is said to have built the first Norman castle. In or about 1115 the two sons of Griffith ab Rhys attacked, stormed, and destroyed the Castle above the old Beaver town, Tre Avanc or Trewanc.

In the north country the Conwy was the chief river-haunt of the "Avanc"; but the Llychwr river-beast was possibly less fabulous. The sea has won great vantage on the land here, and if we look for the original Beaver town it must be below bridge.

Another monster, the Twrch Trwyth, is to be tracked here. He has left his spoor in the upper Llychwr and the Amman valley. Sir John Rhys, in his *Celtic Folklore*, traces this Questing Beast at Clyn Ystyn, a farm between Carmarthen and the waters-meet of the Amman and Llychwr, and thence across into the Llychwr valley. Remembering the Gower bone-caves, one cannot help speculating about these two creatures, and

wondering if the Twrch Trwyth and the "Avanc" are not in Celtic folk-lore a race-memory of the huge brutes that perished centuries before any Celtic word was spoken in Britain? As time went, the tradition may have been tacked on to better-known animals; and the wild boar and the beaver served as the nearest types of their mammoth forefathers. Those who have known a small child make a tiger out of a gib-cat will be at no loss to understand the process.

One need not insist on these remote events. But there are places in South Wales—sea-caves, waste places in the sands, and uncleared forest brakes—that inevitably bring the primitive fauna to mind, and the vale of Llychwr and the sand-dunes below are of them. One unpropitious wintry afternoon I alighted at Llychwr in a rain-storm that immediately drove me into cover at an old inn. The landlord, who was polishing his brass taps, was unluckily a new-comer to the place and knew little about it. However, he called in a serving-maid, a native of that country-side, who showed the painful desire to be exact which one so often finds, in contradiction of the English idea of the Welsh peasant, among the simpler country-folk who are not tourist-corrupted. Mari Jones stood in the doorway, two or three steps above the level of the common-room of the ale-house; and the fire-shine in the kitchen behind tinged her brown hair and cordially framed her in a glimmering ruddy umber light. The figure made an inviting contrast to the cheerless and fireless chamber where I stood doubtfully in my damp clothes. She had been as far as Llygad Llychwr and firmly believed the river flowed thither underground from the smaller Llyn-y-Van.

Yes, she knew Cwrt-y-Carnau too: it was beyond Black Hill and the common—close to the water; there used to be a church there and a place for the monks. "Tir Brenin" was hard by. She had nothing to tell me of the "Sanctuary" at Loughor: but folk said there was a passage underground from Castell Llychwr to the old church at Cwrt-y-Carnau. Some strange tale seems to be attached to this house, but when I asked her about it she slightly shook her head (having at the critical moment heard a noise within the kitchen) and so disappeared through the door.

A night or two later, at a very different inn-keeper's hearth, not far from Ostremuere Castle, I asked him if he knew Llychwr? "Yes, yes!" said he, "but you should go and see Cwrt-y-Carnau! That's an old place there—a great place with great histories!" He offered to escort me there, but fate was against it, and Cwrt-y-Carnau keeps its secret for me.

The same gossip told me a tale about the "knockers" and the mysterious Red Dog in the under-sea workings of the Morva Colliery, near Port Talbot. Some of the colliers saw the Red Dog and heard the knockers one night and took it for a warning. They would have refused to descend the pit next morning, but that others who had heard the same noises and stayed at home, had been fined for it some weeks before. So, after a midnight discussion, they voted for going to work; but the Red Dog was justified, for many died in the terrible explosion next day.

To return for a moment to the Llychwr and its abrupt source. It is not for a coast-book to delay over such tempting inland places as Cwrt Bryn-y-Beirdd, now a farm-house, and Capel Dewi, and

the Druid graves—Beddau Derwyddon. With three delightful companions, two of them children prepared for wonders, I last went in dry summer weather to the Eye of Llychwr, and even then the water flowing out of the rock, although not enough to float a boat, as commonly said of it, would have floated a coracle. The Eye had lost some of its old miraculous effect, by being new-enclosed in a smooth dam of Portland cement; but the scene on that wildish moorland, often as I have visited it, always looks mysterious—a spot to keep old, and beget new, legends. The Castle at Carreg Cennen, the sternest, loneliest, rockiest fastness in all that country, rears up its abutments and sheer towers like an Oriental stronghold or castle bewitched on its grey and red rock, not two miles away; the Black Mountains, filling up the northern confines, keep a gloom which even in sunlight is never lifted. At the foot of the Castle Rock runs another stream, the Cennen, which seems plainly destined to join the Llychwr; but it goes off on an errand of its own, past Pont Trapp and Derwydd, to join the Towy instead. Four miles south the Amman joins the Llychwr stream, and "by here," as David says, came the Twrch Trwyth and his little pigs on the famousest boar hunt in all the sagas. You can take up the scent there at its hottest in the Mabinogion:—

"And the huntsmen went to hunt the Twrch Trwyth as far as Dyffryn Lychwr. And two of the pigs, Gold-haired Heather-Hog and the Grizzly Quester, turned on the hunters and killed all but one. Then Arthur and his host came to the place where Heather-Hog and Grizzly were, and he let loose all his hounds on them; and what with the

CARREG CENNIN CASTLE, CARMARTHENSHIRE.

Drawing by Gastineau.

hubbub and the shouting and barking, Twrch Trwyth heard them, and came to the succour of his hard-pressed pigs. Until that time, the Twrch Trwyth had never showed himself to them, not since he crossed the Irish Sea. But now, with the men and the hounds set upon him, he started off and made for Amman Hill (Mynydd Amanw). And there a young boar of his was killed. It was life for life then, and first one young boar was killed, then another: until in full flight the Questing Beast went on to Amman Valley, where he lost two more of his train. Of all his pigs, there went with him alive from that place none save Golden-bristled Heather Hog and Grizzly Quester."

The hunt goes on fast and mortal then, and Grizzly Quester, after killing many at Ystrad Yw, including Arthur's uncles, Red Eyed Emys and Gwr-Bothu, is himself hard pressed. The Twrch Trwyth himself has at length to yield up the fabulous jewelled Razor and Scissors in the Severn Flood and the Golden Comb in Cornwall, whence he is driven into the deep sea. And thenceforth it was never known where he went. This great hunting saga—of the Boar, the Razor, Comb, and Scissors—that might have been told by a mediæval barber-surgeon of genius in his cups, who had drunk deep of the black wine of Kilhwch, takes a new tinge of local colour when you relate the Great Boar to the twin valleys of Llychwr and Amman.

On a placid airless summer day you might think the flat, sandy shore between the mouth of the Llychwr and the Nose of Pembrey, with the waveless ripple of the ebb tide lapping it, one of the most innocent coasts to be had by any water. But when sailing-ships were plentiful the bay

and estuary often made havoc of those that went astray in the Burry Inlet. The corner at "Cefn Sidan," the Silken Ridge, was the most deadly spot. In 1828 it sent some notable French victims to their deaths. That November a West Indiaman that had come safe all the way from Martinique was wrecked on Cefn Sidan, and most of the crew and passengers perished. Among the latter were Colonel Coquelin and his daughter Adeline, niece of Josephine, former Empress of France. Father and daughter were buried at Pembrey in one grave; and fourteen maidens in deep mourning, as Pembrey folk still tell you, attended the funeral as pall-bearers to the drowned girl. In the churchyard the stone may be seen which Welsh pity raised in memory of the French colonel and his child.

The Castle at Llychwr suffered by being near the uplands, and it was often attacked and thrice surprised. Harry Beaumont's first ruder structure was taken by Meredith and Rhys, of whom you heard at Weobley. It was rebuilt then, as custom was, on a more habitable scale; but only to be again besieged, taken, and burnt to the ground.

Curiously enough, when fifty years later Gerald de Barri passed this way with Archbishop Baldwin, he made no note of any castle, though he speaks of crossing the river. It was, no doubt, in ruins then. The present structure is part early thirteenth and part fourteenth century, according to W. G. Clark, the greatest castle-hunter who invaded this district. Before we left the earlier sieges we might have quoted the "Brut of the Princes," which tells how Rhys Ieaunc, or Young Rhys, collected in 1215 an army of huge size—"lu dirvawr y veint"

—and brought the Castle low. "And from thence he drew toward Gower, and first reduced Castell Llychwr." This suggests that it was the northern outpost of the Gower circuit—the key to the door.

CHAPTER XX

LLANELLY — ST. ELLI — THE OLD TOWN — THE SANDS OF PEMBREY—KIDWELLY AND ITS CASTLE

Llanelly, black-a-vised, smoky, and unlovely, one of those towns that at first appear only destined to make wealth for the rich and poverty for the poor, does not attract the flying tourist. However, the town, despite its grime and its grime-producers, has its associations. Unexpectedly, it is one of the few places in Wales that can claim to have entertained George Meredith. The house where he stayed was afterwards occupied by the Welsh lyric poet "Elved"; and there, one winter night, during a visit some years ago, the present chronicler made acquaintance with another Carmarthen poet, the late Watcyn Wyn, an Eisteddfodwr without guile and an incorrigible wit. At the Cardiff Eisteddfod of 1896, when the sun was pouring down like a furnace, Watcyn was encountered as he emerged from the crowded Pavilion.

"Sut mae, Watcyn? 'Tis very hot—mae hi yn boeth iawn! Is the muse melting?"

"Melting? Dyn anw'l! There's enough of Watcyn lost to make a third-rate bard."

Many of Watcyn's songs and ballads deal with

the country round his own centre of Ammanford. His prose was as idiomatic as his verse.

Castle-hunters differ about the lost Castle of Llanelly. Probably it was only a British fort on the mound known as Pen Castell, now eaten up by the town. G. and I made an attempt to place the site, acting on the directions given us by a native. He bade us look in the empty markets, it not being market-day. We discovered, or thought we did, in which vacant alley of the market the gateway stood. But an uneasy idea afterwards occurred to us that the Honourable Cymmrodor who had pictured it for us had done so in a pleasant spirit of "Hud a Lledrith."* However, if the Castle is lost, there is still the old Stepney mansion, "Great House" (now called Llanelly House), to fall back upon. It was in a bad way when at the end of the eighteenth century it was taken in hand and saved to the town; and its restorer, William Chambers of Bicknor, also built, I believe, the market-house. The original church at Llanelly was St. Elli's (hence the name of the town). The present building was, because of its additional mid bell-tower, which has been spirited away by vandals, of unusual design. Mr. Arthur Mee has written its history (it is dedicated to St. Paul, not St. Elli) with that affection which gives warmth to the parish record. There is another book on the old town by a native, Mr. Innes, which is crammed with the little disappearing local details and the local colour needed to individualise a place. He has, among the records, an account of Llanelly Bridge; and, as we know, bridges and rivers and abers become things of moment to the Welsh

* Illusion and Art Magic.

wayfarer. Over it the town-seer makes you see, as in an allegory of life, the pageant of old Llanelly—the coach with dusty horses, presently to be unharnessed and sent to swim in the bridge-pools; the soldiers marching against "Rebecca"; and the funeral bier of Sir John Stepney, the coffin covered with a scarlet pall.

South of the town, beyond the docks, on a sandy peninsula, lies a solitary farm-house with a long memory. Its name, Mach Ynys, is doubtfully said to be corrupted from Mynach Ynys, or Mynachdy-yn-Ynys(?). Here some have figured an early monastery on the strand, that was founded by St. Peiro, who was followed by that same Sampson whose pillar we saw at Llantwit.

Over St. Elli, too, there is an old dispute—to wit, whether the mysterious child of a barren Queen in the unknown Isles of Grimbul, that Cadoc brought from oversea, was boy or girl? However, Elli appears to have decided, when the day came, to be a boy. His sanctity, after his death, grew greater and greater. The Holy Wells of St. Elli —"Ffynnonau Elli"—were better known than any at Llandrindod, Builth, and otherwhere; and one man told Fenton he had seen "seven parishes meet at the Mab Sant," or wake of St. Elli, on January 17th.

Long afterwards the greater tradition of the Welsh pulpit was well carried on here by the eloquence of David Rees of "Capel Als." People travelled from a long way at times, as I have gathered from the Tales of a Grandfather (who lived at Carmarthen), to hear David Rees. One of the most remarkable traces of the old church-plays on record anywhere is to be found in the accounts of his early preaching. David used to carry with

him into the pulpit little biblical puppets—that is, wooden figures dressed to represent some of the Old Testament characters—and he made them go through a brief interlude during his sermon. By lending them dramatic life, and vividly impersonating and differentiating them in his play of voice and gesture, he so enlivened his Mystery that the illusion he created and threw over his congregation was absolute. But after a time it came to be thought indecorous to use such aids to doctrine, and it was given up. The old habit of the Welsh pulpit, however, could not be killed out in a year of respectable Sundays. Only now is it giving way in other characteristics under the Anglicising, depolarising effect of the colleges and newspapers.

But now, to travel on to Kidwelly, viâ Pembrey and Burry Port. The railway after leaving Llanelly skirts the sandy estuary of Cefn Patrick in a half amphibious engaging fashion. At spring-tides the sea laps against the railway embankment, until you seem to be running through deep water. Whether Patrick once sailed in a curragh or coracle over these sandy shallows, I do not know; but the Saints had a mariner's trust in the water. It was their *via media* between the Celtic shores, Irish, Cornish, Breton, and Welsh.

One veteran apostle I do remember by the Burry water-side, a London physician, the late Dr. George Bird, friend of Leigh Hunt, Swinburne, and Sir Richard Burton, the traveller, rechristened by one of his friends "the Apostle of Health." It was on a summer's evening, and riding sharp round a sandy spur on a bicycle, I came full tilt upon a little group of people, "beautiful women and radiant men," and this noble old man sitting in their midst. If St. Patrick ever sat by that

water with an equal lustre and personal radiance, it is no wonder if legends multiplied about him.

The constantly growing and multiplying sands of this estuary make a Sahara of the coast-line between Pembrey and Llanelly. It continues about six miles beyond the "Nose," over Pembrey Burrows and Towyn Burrows to Towyn Point. Beyond the end of it, at low tide, lie Cefn Sidan sands, two or three miles more. Here they say once stood a fair city. Traces of foundations of walls and stubborn roots of trees are still to be seen, at unwonted low tides, especially after a heavy freshet in the Towy. How far the lost city may be traced to notions of the washed-away village of Hawton, which is shown in Saxton's and Speed's maps of the county, it would be hard to tell. Hawton lay, however, on the other side of the Gwendraeth, under St. Ishmael's.

Coasting vessels long had a very warrantable dread of the treacherous sand-bay into which flow the Gwendraeth, Towy, and Taf Rivers. It is hard to get even a small yacht through the sands up to Kidwelly ; for you have a snaky track to negotiate that is only seen for what it really is at low water. The navigable way is bare half a cable in width, and on either side, at flood, there is about three feet of water over the sand. "Nothing bigger than a coal barge," says the *Complete Sailor*, "should try to make Kidwelly!"

CHAPTER XXI

THE TOWY AND FERRYSIDE—LLANSTEPHAN CASTLE — ST. ISHMAEL'S AND THE LOST TOWN OF HAWTON

FOUR rivers have their aber in the inlet of Carmarthen Bay, watched by St. Ishmael's Church on one side and Llanstephan Castle on the other—the two Gwendraeths, the Towy and the Taf. Of these the Towy is a great stream; indeed, there is none in Wales, wild or sober, fairer in variety, richer in memory. The other rivers are tributary to it. To quote Leland, "Tave semith to cumme at full sea to the mouth of Towe River, but at low water marke a man may perceive how it ha(steth) to the se on the sandis hard by Towe."

In fact, this triple inlet, shaped rudely like a starfish with three curved limbs pretty visible, the fourth and fifth being lost in sand and water between Cefn Sidan and Laugharne sands, contracts and dilates in a surprising way with the ebb and flow. Looking from Ferryside or from St. Ishmael's at low water, you gaze upon miles on miles of sand. Then at times with a strong south-west wind behind, the tide comes up at a gallop and fairly races along the railway embankment. At spring-tides you meet it unexpectedly in the shape of frothy waves under the sandy railway

arch, where the sand has been dry and the bits of seaweed have been brittle for weeks before; and I have seen it flow on and turn the high-road within and below the railway bank into a river. If you have been tempted out at low-water a mile or two on the beach where the cockle-pickers go, you may have to use strategy and skirt shoal-water to get safe home. In good aspects of the sun these tidal sand-deserts have a quite beautiful light bright colouring, with a dancing kind of radiance that suggests a mirage and some lost town like Hawton quivering in middle-air with more roofs and pinnacles than ever it had of old.

To the inbound mariner these sands, beloved of small boys, cockles, and flatfish are a bother and a danger. If his schooner escape Cefn Sidan it may get sand-bogged at Warley Point. Hear the *Complete Sailor's* warning: "No vessel should try to make Laugharne or Carmarthen without a pilot." And again, speaking particularly of the Towy: "To take a vessel four or five miles through an invisible channel not more than three cables wide, with a tide running four or five knots, and breaking sea on either side, can only be done by an old hand."

One afternoon, with a blue-and-white sky, the wind nor'-westerly, and the tide swimming in broad and strong, we hired a sailing-boat, and tacked out into the bay, seeing Llanstephan Castle and the dark waterside wood and Lord's Park slide away from us like a dream. As we sailed on, we saw an infinite number of jellyfish—pale blue, purple, orange, white—like globes of submerged light, deep in the water. Our bare-legged boatman had humorous blue eyes and a face brown as an Arab's. He told us, in reply to such idle ques-

tions as landsmen ask, how three whales once came into Carmarthen Bay, and a tale his father had of a foreign ship, the *Stadveldt*, wrecked on Carmarthen Bar, and five hands drowned. He much preferred, however, to talk of the cockle-women of a certain Cockletown, and their habits. He laughed slily as he told us they were very angry if their men did a stroke of work beyond cooking the dinner; and on Sunday they went to chapel like ladies, in silk and satin, with big gold brooches and great jewelled earrings to deck them out. He said "Tref-y-Cocos" had laws of its own; and the people were so clannish, they never married out of their tribe. Some other hearsay reports he gave us of their marriage customs, which sounded like a bit of Herodotus. Evidently "Tref-y-Cocos," which you will not find on the map, is a place apart, where the cockle-shell middens entrench a set of inhabitants who are not Welsh, Flemish, or English, but simply "Pobl-y-Cocos"—cockle-folk, primitives.

Although the open country about Ferryside is a little bare and monotonous, it is broken near the sea by typical Carmarthenshire cwms and small valleys. Of these you have a good instance in Melin Cwm, beyond Ystrad Bridge on the Carmarthen road. The road up the cwm diverges on the left from the main road, and leads past a mill and an old-style wayside inn, and so to Iscoed Park. A Maen-llwyd stands in the park above. This road goes on to Llandefeilog, one of the true old-style Welsh agricultural villages. Several of the Llandefeilog farm-houses, *e.g.*, Nant y Llan, which formed part of the monastery, are very well worth examining. An old fishing-weir was formerly held by the lord of the manor, and the villagers were

allowed its use. The church, dedicated to St. Maelog, is ten centuries old, and even the Methodists have a chapel (formerly belonging to the Established Church) which dates from the fourteenth century. About a mile from the village is an old eye-well, on a tenement called Pistyll, in the lordship of Cloigin.

Ferryside has no popular antiquities: even its church—a chapel-of-ease to St. Ishmael, built in 1828, rebuilt in 1875—is new. Yet it has its traditions. It used for a time to be known as St. Thomas's, because the church is so dedicated; but its real past is bound up with St. Ishmael's, where you still hear stories of the wreckers who watched Cefn Sidan sands like wolves, or of the old village of Hawton, and its foundation-walls seen at low tide. Hawton, it is said, was originally defended from the sea and the sea-sand by a range of burrows which gradually gave way before wind and water, till at last, at some desperate inundation, the village was devastated.

Dangerous as it may appear to strangers, the cockle-pickers of Ferryside and Llansaint at the ebb tide treat the farthest stretches of the wet sands, a mile or more out, like honest *terra firma*. They and their carts may be seen for long hours at their cockle-picking. Indeed, one recalls the stooping forms of the cockle-women, minutely outlined on the pale, shimmering, sandy levels where the kittiwakes run and whistle, as a constant part of the picture. These cockle-women are a stout, hard-working, and exclusive folk, who hold dear their privileges and the old customs of the cockle-grounds. Their mouths are full of Welsh proverbs and scraps of folk-lore; and Llansaint is their metropolis, a pure village of cockle-pickers. St.

Ishmael's in the old days was their cathedral; it is a rude, impressive structure, curiously expressing the place where it stands. The interior is like some profound ecclesiastical crypt or cavern, sombre and austere to a degree; on a hot summer's day its coolness is delicious. The parish register goes back to 1561, and contains some incidental entries as to great storms and loss of shipping on the 26th and 27th of November, 1703, and the corn-famine in 1597, which are of extra-parochial interest.

A railway-crossing will be found leading to the sands a little below St. Ishmael's Church; and one can return by the sands when the tide is out instead of keeping to the high-road. You pass on the way a piece of aboriginal architecture in the *Cockle Rock*—so called, we were told by a smiling lassie, "because cockles cannot climb it!"

If you are stationed at Ferryside, Llanstephan Castle becomes your one inevitable landmark and neighbourly sentinel across the water. You never tire of the rude coronal it makes on that shapely hill. It draws you imperceptibly back into the Middle Ages, when every castle held its castlery at its peril, when the "Fair Family," the "Tylwyth Teg," still lived in the woods about Laques, and when Merlin himself was still reincarnating himself in the spirits of the Welsh poets, who wished to prophesy the return of Arthur or Owain Lawgoch, or the fall of London.

Approaching the Vale as the Normans originally did, we perceive how well Llanstephan Castle was posted (three hundred feet above sea-level, or two hundred feet higher than Kidwelly Castle) to command the mouth of the Towy and the surrounding lands. Not much of the real interior,

despite its commanding proportions as seen from below, remains but the outer walls or curtains between the towers, the gate-tower, the keep, and some of the vaulted chambers in its basement. Compare it with Kidwelly, and you realise how much has perished through the wear and tear of time and no doubt the free quarrying of its stone for building farm walls and folds. The view is an enchanting one from the top of the keep—whose staircase, though broken, is still available—or from the western walls, which do not rise insurmountably above the ground-level of the Castle-close. Ferryside and St. Ishmael's and the high grounds above define the old region of Llangyndeyrn, across which the Welshmen once swept in force to harry the deer of Kidwelly and besiege the Castle.

According to Welsh tradition, the first stone castle on this site was founded by Uchtred, a Welsh lord in the early Norman days; but the hill was probably stockaded centuries before the Normans fought and built their way into the country. Having got to Kidwelly, they must have seen at once the strategic value of Llanstephan. The first Norman castle may have been only a palisaded tower, strengthening the main point of an earlier earth-fort. It was not until the time of the Barons de Londres that it gained its completer form, as shown by the present ruins. In 1143, the three bold sons of the lord of Towy, Griffith ap Rhys, Cadell, Meredydd and Rhys, who had grown practised in upsetting the Norman chess-board, made a determined attack on the Towy strongholds. Carmarthen Castle taken, they marched south, leaving Rhys-y-Gors alone for some reason, and beset Llanstephan by night.

LLANSTEPHAN CASTLE : FROM THE SANDS.

Drawing by Gastineau.

The Normans could easily convey a signal to the garrison at Kidwelly. At any rate, a strong force advanced from the east, and crossing the Towy attacked the besiegers. But the three sons of Griffith ap Rhys beat off this counter-attack, and then took the Castle.

St. Anthony's Well may be reached in the dip on the south-west side of the Castle by the path that skirts the foot of the Castle Hill, hugging the steep brink above the beach. The Well has preserved, for a wonder, the old stone-work and the niche where the Saint's figure stood. The water used to be thought of sure and miraculous effect, and is still used by the country-folk for eye-complaint. A pin, or some equivalent, had to be dropped in the water by the sick visitor. A pin is nothing to us; but think of the far-come pilgrim kneeling there and praying in the time when a pin was an old country woman's precious thing.

From St. Anthony's Well the path carries one onward to the slopes of Parc-yr-Arglwydd, the next hill, southward and seaward to that on which the Castle is posted. This affords a finer sea-outlook than the Castle Hill. But the best high pitch in the neighbourhood is on the road to Llanybri, a village situate two miles inland and north-west of Llanstephan, nearly five-hundred feet above sea-level, which has a small modern church, erected by the family of Laques. The old house, called "Laques" (*pron.* "Lax"), mentioned by Drysdale, was a seat of the same Lloyds that lived at the Plâs for so many centuries. They gave up the Plâs when Sir William Hamilton became owner there. The old "Plâs" was on another site, a little lower than the

present house. As you look at the fair surroundings of the Plâs at Llanstephan you can recall the figure of Nelson, who was a guest there of the Hamiltons. On one occasion he and Lady Hamilton drove into Carmarthen to see Edmund Kean play at the small theatre in the town. The physician, Sir John Williams, who lived until lately there, collected at the Plâs a noble library destined by him for the nation, which has gone to the National Library at Aberystwyth.

Llanstephan is noted for its sweet chime. Thirty or forty years ago an amiable visitor, Mary Curtis, described the church: "In the north transept is an aperture closed in; from its looking directly to the altar, it must be a hagioscope. Through this, in Romish times, those who sat in the transept could see the priest at the altar and the holy things. Squenches is a name sometimes given to these apertures, but it is not the proper word. Where the vestry is now was a large door before the restoration of the church, though which the coffin was conveyed to the place of burial. On the north side of the altar are the ancient tombs of the Lloyds, of Laques, and of the Meares family, in a sort of aisle, which was once distinct from the church."

The same writer tells us, too, of the "very ancient house called 'Plâs Brych,' Bryd or Brodyr, said to have been the residence of monks."

When we were youngsters, the eight-mile jaunt by road from Carmarthen to Llanstephan was a recognised holiday adventure. The village inns then, I remember, would be surrounded by a motley collection of vehicles; while inside tea and cockles and other mightier viands supplied continual relays of feasters, who set off home

in the evening part singing along the darker roads, or listening to a treble-voice—

"Dos di ati, dywed wrthi,
Mod i'n wylo'r dwr yn heli."

CHAPTER XXII

THE TOWN OF CARMARTHEN—A CLARE CASTLE—MERLIN'S TREE—DICK STEELE

As you can sail up the Towy lazily to Carmarthen quay in a coasting-vessel, wind and tide favouring, you may add the town fairly to your Welsh coast route. It lies about eight miles from the mouth of the Towy, on whose north bank it is grouped above the meadows like a demurer garden city, with more white and brown and grey about it than the very red red-brick now favoured by the urban builder. If only the Castle had not been so amerced by time, the town, standing over the river, as it does, would still have some signs of a tower-crowned mediæval front to present to the wayfarer approaching by the old bridge. You may judge of the effect it had when Dick Steele retired here to end his days from the queer print by Bucke reproduced (see p. 230).

In Carmarthen it fell to the present writer to spend several of his early years, beside many intermitted months afterwards, when the town was the base for holiday expeditions. During part of the time we lived in a spacious old house in Nott Square, which had been a bishop's palace. The house had an individuality which had survived the modernising of its street-front. Under-

neath it was the undoubted crypt of a chapel of Edward IV.'s time, and in a deeper niche was a well which was served with a chain as I remember it, and which we believed to be bottomless. It was positively a house to favour the romantic faculty, and our maids dreamed dreams and told tales. Acres of attics, opening on a roof with a scrambling path on the leads, helped to give effect to the legend of a bishop told by one old servant, Hannah. According to Hannah, one of the bishops who lived here was a bad wicked man; and he had a wife, although it was forbidden priests to wed; so he hid her in the attics, where, poor lady, afraid both of her husband and his enemies, she made away with herself. The story, whether authentic or not, left us afraid of dark cupboards and passages as the day went. We half-feared to see the bishop's white lady, as she had been described to us, appear in her night-dress carrying the rope with which she hanged herself.

The town was very poorly lit in those days, with dim and infrequent street-lamps. But their flame, such as it was, had a deep orange colour which accorded well with the evening greys and umbers. One lamp stood nearly at our door, and looking up, it cast the dappled, wavering pattern of the tall drawing-room windows upon the ceiling and gold cornice with an effect that was both disturbing and enchanting to our fancies. Through that pale reflected other-window we looked into we knew not what—some other town with other people, paler and fainter than the real men and women. Another lamp guarded the corner of the square where a narrow street led to the inbuilt entrance and hidden gateway

of the Castle, blocked by mean roofs, houses, and market-inns. This narrow street, as it twisted its way down to the quay, clung close to the Castle walls. At the quay usually lay two or three of the coasting-vessels that brought coal and timber to the town, moored below the bridge. The Castle, I grieve to say, had long before my time (in 1789–1792) been turned into the county gaol; and its river frontage was hid by a huge blank disfiguring gaol-yard wall without a single tower or other determining feature to break and relieve it. In the day when the country wakes to the pleasure of its own history and its memorial buildings, it will restore to the town the approach to that fine gateway, an end to a street vista of which any place that cared two pins for its architecture would be proud.

The Castle, mainly a Clare Castle, dates from about 1140; but in a more primitive way it kept guard before that, the site being one of those naturally pointed out for use by its command of the river approaches. The Britons used it in their own way; the Romans used it in theirs; the Welsh and the Normans used it turnabout long after the last Romans had gone.

You best realise the Castle in its extent by looking at the plan in Speed's map of the town, 1610. The courtyard was a large one, with three flanking towers, a fine keep and unusually spacious apartments and living-rooms at the north-west corner. There was no gate, I believe, on the north side where the ominously shut gaol-gates are now, looking towards Spilman Street. The chapel attached to the Castle, St. Edward's, must have been a very fine one, to judge by the crypt in the cellars of the Sheaf Inn.

Before the Clare Castle one was built out of a yet older fort to seal the first Norman advance about 1083. This held its place, and stood siege, for some thirty-three years. Still earlier, in 1079, the Welsh chroniclers say that Gwilim Vastard—William the Bastard, William the Conqueror—had been on pilgrimage to St. David's. If so, no doubt he paused at Carmarthen on the way; and if we accept that record, we are driven to connect the Castle of 1083 with his journey. For when William I. went on a pilgrimage he kept a keen eye to other sites than those of the churches he passed. The Castle held its own until the day when Owain, son of Caradoc, was deputy castellan for its Norman owner. It was then that Gruffydd, son of Rhys ab Tewdwr, who had lately returned from Irish exile, appeared on the scene. Another prince, the son of Cynan, had been giving him harbourage in the north, but had promised Henry, who feared the Tudor intrigue, either to give him up or to have him quietly put away. Luckily a servant carried secret news of this treachery, and he escaped just in time, flying to Aberdaron where the Church gave him sanctuary, and so making his way south. Then the mesh was drawn round him in the south. Henry, hearing that he had escaped and made a stand in Strath Towy, sent Owain, son of Cadwgan, and another chief in pursuit. The Vale or Strath of Towy seems only a scene for a pastoral, but its cross glens, leading off into wild country, often sent armed bands swooping down upon the town-gate and citadel of Carmarthen. One of these bands under the young prince, who had escaped Henry's snares, surprised the Castle at the end of this episode, and Owain, Caradoc's hopeful son, was

killed on the ramparts as he stood. Owain was deputy castellan for the Norman lord.

Failing your chance of going to gaol in the Castle and so scaling its walls, the tower of St. Peter's Church is your best point of vantage whence to see Carmarthen to-day. There with the aid of Speed's map and a little local fantasy you can discern not only the old parish bounds and the old town within the parish of St. Peter, but you can see the old inhabitants of the town parading in contempt of history, Merlin and Dick Steele among them.

Carmarthen, as its Welsh name with its play upon "Merlin" or "Myrddin" (*Caer-Fyrddin*) shows, is probably a Welsh echo of a British place-name. The Latin names Muridinum and Maridunum hint at the derivation. Ptolemy gives us the first, Antoninus the second. Roman roads run east, north-east, and west to and from Carmarthen, whose traces are pointed out below, as the names Sarnau (causeways), Pensarn (head of the causeway), &c., declare. When the Romans went, the Welsh no doubt resumed the place, fighting amongst each other as Welsh custom was. We conjure up Merlin here to fill the historical gap; and leap some centuries to reach the year when Gruffydd of the Tudors attacked and took it. Having taken the Castle, he sacked the town, but made no effort to keep either, and drew to a hold at Dinevor. After this, Carmarthen Castle saw more fighting than fell to the lot of any other castle in this district, owing to its position in a region perfectly formed for Welsh warfare. In 1137 it was taken by Owain Gwynedd; in 1143 by his sons, including Howel the Tall, the poet, a rare castle-breaker. In 1159 it was besieged by Rhys

THE SOUTH VIEW OF CAERMARTHEN - CASTLE & TOWN.
This Prospect is humbly Inscribed by
his most Oblig'd & Ferv.t Serv.ts
Sam.l & Nath.l Buck

OLD CARMARTHEN.

Print after Samuel and Nathaniel Buck.

ab Gruffydd, Prince of Dyfed, but the siege was raised by a formidable combined force, Norman and Welsh.

Nott Square, at the south end of King Street, was formerly High Street, and here stood the town-stocks and a cross, within a few feet of the site now occupied by General Nott's monument. At this cross it was that Bishop Ferrar suffered martyrdom on March 30, 1555. Foxe, in his *Book of Martyrs*, says it was in the market-place he was burnt, on the "south side of the Market-cross," which some local writers have placed near the Priory. But as the old street-market was held chiefly in the High Street, not far from the gate of the Castle, and there was a cross where we have indicated, little doubt is left about it.

The writer's grandfather described to him the aspect of the town as it was when the market-stalls were spread on a Saturday or a fair-day, with one stall for hats including the "het befr," or tall Welsh hat, and others for Welsh homespun, and yet others for the good brown pots and pans from the local potteries. You could buy eggs then for twopence or threepence a dozen, and a nice Nantgaredig fowl for tenpence, and a fat duck for a shilling. Taylor, the "Water Poet," visited Carmarthen on his last journey, and waxed eloquent over its good fare and low prices:—

"Butter, as good as the world affords, 2½d. or 3d. the pound; a salmon two foot and halfe long, twelve pence. Biefe, 1½d. a pound; oysters 1d. the 100: egs 12 for a penny. A little money will buy much, for there is nothing scarce dear or hard to come by but tobacco pipes."

The two back streets that continue the line of

King Street and Nott Square down through what is still called Bridge Street to the quay and the bridge show the old characteristically narrow chief approach to the town from the bridge. On the extreme left, next to the "White Lion," and abutting on its yard, we come upon an unexpected bit of the old Castle. Near the Castle gates the market used to be held in the space of Upper Market Street, now Nott Square, and this was the heart of the old town.

Descending Lower Market Street to Guildhall Square, you pass the site of old St. Mary's Church at the Guildhall, and what was St. Mary's Street, now the Guildhall Square, to the Dock Gate, the old north-western gateway of the town. And turning to the right out of the extreme corner of the square, and bearing to the left through Red Street, you come to the present market; on Saturday forenoon a bustling scene with its rows of market-women and its hearty show of country produce and Welsh flannel and Carmarthen cloths.

At the north-east side of the town, standing well among its trees at the meeting of many streets, St. Peter's Church is the best memorial left of old Carmarthen town. The spacious fourteenth-century building that we discern now includes large portions of an earlier one; instead of aisles it has two naves, one of which is much older than the other. The tower is tall and massive. The interior is unusually full of monuments and mural tablets. The most remarkable, the tomb of Sir Rhys ap Thomas and his wife, was conveyed here from the old Priory Church, when the ruins of that vanished landmark were desecrated in the early eighteenth century.

There is no inscription now on his tomb, but it

might run: "Here lies Sir Rhys ap Thomas, Ruler and Governor (under favour of Henrys VII. and VIII.) of all Wales; Chamberlain of Carmarthen and Cardigan; Seneschal of Builth, Haverford-west and Rhoose. He fought in five battles, held the most famous tourney ever seen in Wales—at Carew—left innumerable children, and died in 1527 full of years and honours; escaping by a timely death the mortification of seeing the dire change already impending in the fortunes of his family."

Another tomb, less defaced by age and time, shows us the effigy of a praying lady, the Lady Vaughan, with an impressive, curious epitaph which begins—

> "Kinde Reader Vnderneath this tomb doth lye
> Choice Elixar of mortalitie."

If one leaves St. Peter's by Priory Street, one passes the old Priory site hidden behind the houses on one's right, and then reaches presently, in the dip of the street where the Oernant brook flows out, "Merlin's Tree"—a last remnant of the oak, propt now and set on a base of mason-work—with a new tree growing up beside it. And there one may drink in, if one can, that very breath of mystery which the Silurist's brother drank in elsewhere. According to old tradition:—

> "When Merlin's tree shall tumble down,
> Tumble then shall Merlin's town."

There is a reference to the Tree in a much later rhyme:—

> "Three sailors pass, by the Water-Gate,
> And sing of Merlin, as it grows late.

Last night they sailed the Irish Sea,
The bitter sea, in a wild twilight
Where its tide swims north to Enlli's strait;
From the Water-Gate to Merlin's Tree
They sing to-night
Of Merlin's death and Annwn's might."

Sir Richard Steele's connection with Carmarthen was through his second wife, Mary Scurlock, only daughter of Jonathan Scurlock of Llangunnor, and it was only the last four or five years of his life he spent here. One cannot but speculate on the effect of the sequestered life of a small country squire at Ty Gwyn under Llangunnor Hill, upon the soldier, essayist, poet and wit. He had lived through the follies and excitements that a campaign in the Low Countries, much lively commerce with the London stage, a give-and-take partnership with Addison, and many quarrels and bitter jealousies, and encounters with men like Swift, had formerly provided. It was Swift who said of him (in the "Satire on Dr. Delaney"):—

"Thus Steele, who own'd what others writ,
And flourish'd by imputed Wit,
From perils of a hundred Jayls
Withdrew to starve and dye in Wales."

But Bishop Hoadly of Hereford, where Steele lodged for awhile before retiring to Carmarthen, said of his friend that he retired to retrench in his living and save money so as to "do justice to his creditors." At any rate to Carmarthen he came, apparently with a view to settling down for good, in 1725 or 1726; and though he paid visits to Hereford, he returned to London no more. A stroke of paralysis made him feeble in

both mind and body in the last three years of his life; but a pretty picture is given of the sick man by Victor, who writes: "I was told he retained his cheerful sweetness of temper to the last, and would often be carried out in a Summer's evening, where the country lads and lasses were assembled at their rural sports; and with his pencil give an order on his agent, the mercer, for a new gown for the best dancer." Steele died in 1729, September 1st, at a house standing, some say, on the spot where the Post Office now stands, and which was converted, after his death, into an inn, the "Ivy Bush"—not to be confused, of course, with the present "Ivy Bush" in Spilman Street.

What should be said of Steele's Carmarthen wife—his "Dear Prue," his pretty, peevish Prue—spoilt child, wilful and shrewd, contrary and charming woman? We must be kind to her memory, for his sake and because she was a Carmarthen girl, and must have known its streets as a little maid, quite as well as she knew St. James's or Hampton Court afterwards. Her "little disputes" with her husband notwithstanding, she must have found life entertaining in his company, for he went on being an ardent, whimsical lover long after he had become her husband: indeed, to the end. "I love you better," he wrote, "than the light of my eyes, or the life-blood of my heart." He wooed her to good temper with walnuts and coach-rides. "Dear Prue," he wrote once, "I send you seven pen'north of walnuts at five a penny. Which is the greatest proof I can give you at present of my being with my whole Heart yrs. Rich^{d}. Steele." But the thirty-five walnuts had diminished by the time the letter was sent off, for he wrote outside it, "there are

but twenty-nine walnuts." Next day he sent her fifty more, and sent his "service" to Binns, who was Prue's companion and confidante, and therefore to be carefully propitiated. That was in 1708. Lady Steele does not seem to have made any long visit to Carmarthen after her marriage until 1716, when she returned there to look after her property, leaving her husband and children behind. She was said to be not an excessively fond mother, but he wrote gay, impulsive letters about the children during her absence; now to tell her, "your son is mighty well employed in tumbling on the floor of the room and sweeping the sand with a feather." Now, again, Betty and Molly, the two girls, have been with him in Paradise Row, eating strawberries and cream, in appreciating which he showed them (he is careful to tell us) a father's good example. Meanwhile she continued her coyness, even at a distance, and often sent him cold letters. When she does relax for a moment, and call him "good Dick," it makes him almost ready to forget his gout, and walk all the way down to Carmarthen. She was not happier without him than with him. She quarrelled with her servants and her Welsh relations. Her nerves gave out; hereditary gout declared itself. She left Carmarthen and returned to London at the close of 1717; and before another year was ended she had ended her strange tale. By the contrariety of fate the Carmarthen wife was buried at Westminster Abbey, and her husband, the London wit, play-writer, Tatler, at Carmarthen. Let the following lines of her writing, which are to be seen, scribbled on a scrap of paper, among the MSS. at the British Museum, serve to convince us that there was more under her moods

and fancies than most of Steele's biographers have allowed:—

> "Ah, Dick Steele, that I were sure
> Your love, like mine, would still endure;
> That time, nor absence, which destroys
> The cares of lovers, and their joys,
> May never rob me of that part
> Which you have given of your heart:
> Others unenvy'd may possess
> Whatever they think happiness.
> Grant this, O God, my great request:
> In his dear arms may I for ever rest."

Betty, or Elizabeth, the only child of the marriage that survived, who is said to have joined her mother's beauty to her father's wit, married a Welsh judge, John Trevor, who became Lord Trevor of Bromham. Prior to this she was the cause of a duel between two less fortunate suitors.

Sir Richard Steele was buried in the old family vault of the Scurlocks, which is near one of the doors of St. Peter's Church. To realise what the Carmarthen of Steele and his wife was like, we may take Bucke's well-known view of the town, and picture houses with gabled roofs and narrower streets, and the still up-standing towers of the Castle above the bridge. Then, starting from the middle of King Street, we can take our way over the bridge to Llangunnor, where he lived in Ty Gwyn, now a farm-house. I remember as a youngster staring in on a hot day through the lattice of the dairy windows at the cool white pans of milk and cream.

Another reminiscence is of the Fair Days in the town, particularly of John Brown's Fair (I never learnt who John Brown was), when the horses

and cattle used to stand tethered to the railings of St. Peter's, and when you would see a horse-couper bringing a great horse at full trot down King Street to show off his paces, and shouting "Hi, hi, hi!" to ware the crowd. "John Brown's Fair" still flourishes, and is known as far away as Norfolk and Stagshaw Bank in the county of Durham.

John Taylor, the "Water Poet," whose list of market prices has already been quoted, was very nearly lost on his road to Carmarthen on his Welsh travels. He was then an old man, and as he takes pains to tell us, he was miserably horsed. Missing his road as the day went, he had contrived to flounder into a bog or quagmire.

"I had much adoe," he writes, "to draw myself out of the dirt or my poore weary Dun out of the mire. . . . A horseman of Wales that could speak English overtook me and brought me to Caermarden and good entert^{n} at (the) house of one Mistris Oakley. . . . A good large town with a defencible strong castle and reasonable haven for small barkes and boats, which formerly was for the use of good ships, now it is much impedimented with shelvs, sands, and other annoyances; it is said Merlyn the prophet was born there."

CHAPTER XXIII

RHYD-Y-GORS—THE TALE OF THE THREE PILGRIMS —ST. CLEAR'S AND THE ROMANCE OF THE BEAUTIFUL MISS BURNES—LAUGHARNE AND PENDINE—HOWEL THE GOOD, AND PWYLL PRINCE OF DYVED

Going by train west from Carmarthen, you leave the Towy behind as you cross the bridge between Johnstown and Llanllwch, keeping fairly close thereafter for some distance to the high-road, which, again, dogs the old Roman road, the "Via Julia." If you are quick enough you can just surprise a glimpse on your left, immediately the bridge is crossed, of a comfortable-looking house (an outpost of the lunatic asylum) below the railway level. The house stands on the disputed site of a lost castle, famous in the record *Rhyd-y-Gors* ("Ford of the Bog"). Not quite two miles south on the river cliff, overhanging the zigzagging main road to Llanstephan and its castle, is *Castell Moel* ("Bald Castle"), better known as Green Castle, where a farm-house is girt about by some of the chambers of a Tudor mansion. On my visit there, one Saturday afternoon many years ago, a farm-boy and girl and one or two children were the sole garrison, their elders having gone to market. They showed me the house, but had only a con-

fused tale to tell about the ruins, in which Roman soldiers seemed to be contemporary with Rebecca's Daughters.

But meanwhile the railway has left Towy side, and begun to climb and make its way through the green hills that divide the watershed of the Towy and the Taf and some of its tributaries, the Cywyn, the Dewi Fawr, and the Gynin. Reaching the Cywyn, you find at the aber, whence it flows into the Taf estuary, two churches, which it helps to name, *Llanfihangel-* and *Llandeilo-Abercowyn*, the latter another of the places dedicated to St. Teilo. In Llanfihangel Abercowyn churchyard is a triple grave with a very strange legend attached to it, which as you con it over makes you wonder about the old Pilgrim's Way to Menevia.

Three pilgrims journeying to St. David's fell sick here of the plague, and, afraid of being left unburied, decided that the least sick of the three should put an end to and bury his companions in a grave into which he too was finally to creep. But in the end the pains of death gat hold on him, and he was unable to adjust the slab over the grave. How much of the story is true? Possibly the grave was ransacked, and the story invented to explain the displaced covering-stone. Not many years ago a woman in Brittany committed suicide by digging a grave and partly covering herself with earth, and pulling down a slab over all. As for this unhappy haven, it used to be said that while the pilgrims' grave was well tended, and kept clear of weeds, the little peninsula would flourish and be fruitful. But church and churchyard have for over half a century been helped on their way to ruin. A new church, Victorian and

inglorious, but better placed, serves Llandeilo Abercowyn now.

The village of St. Clear's, which you reach after the seven-mile run from Carmarthen, is your best point from which to invade Llanfihangel Abercowyn. St. Clear's is one of those lazily-straggling, long-drawn villages which often perplex the tired vagabond in South Wales. Such a man accosted me on an ancient plea opposite the "Mariner's Arms" about half-way down the interminable street. He was very dusty—and, I fear, very thirsty. He said he had tramped all the way from Milford—"God-strewt he had!"

St. Clear's is so called "after Santa Clara, an early sister of the Church, who founded a church here in St. David's time" (?). Leland speaks of a castle at St. Clear's, which is now only to be traced by the mound called "Banc y Bailey," where perhaps the keep stood. The present church is of all dates and memories. A sister of James I., Lady Drummond, lies buried in the chancel. A small Cluniac cell, served by a prior and two monks, was founded here in 1291. At the Dissolution its land went to All Souls, Oxford, which still maintains a tithe-claim on the parish.

An extraordinary tale, that might almost have been adumbrated by Nathaniel Hawthorne, is told of St. Clear's. It begins—a good opening!—a year or two after the Battle of Waterloo. A mysterious party arrived one day at the "White Lion," and after careful inspection took a house called "The White Cottage." The party included a lady who walked lame and used crutches, her daughter, a beautiful girl who passed as Miss Burnes, and a young man, a son, who looked delicate, and who was rarely seen, being absorbed, it was said, in

chemistry. Presently, when Miss Burnes had become a great favourite in the neighbouring society, uneasy rumours about bank-note forgeries on Carmarthen banks gained vogue. A suspicious pocket-book, dropped by Miss Burnes, stuffed with £5 and £10 notes, gave a clue. But her party had suddenly disappeared meanwhile. At Bath the young lady was detected passing a forged note: her brother was traced to Bristol, all three were thrown into prison, and the ladies, being tried first, were sentenced to death. However, the son's trial came on, and he vowed they were absolutely innocent, and he was the guilty person. In the end, he was hanged, and they escaped with a year's imprisonment. Their heartlessness in regard to their doomed confederate excited much comment. The sequel is the strangest part of the story. Miss Burnes became travelling companion to a lady of rank—met at Florence the heir to an earldom, who fell in love with her; married him, and died—a countess. While in Carmarthen prison this interesting figurante is described as wearing a wonderful grey silk frock cut in Spanish fashion, and draped with a black lace shawl, while a small velvet cap adorned one side of her pretty head.

Laugharne is reached viâ St. Clear's Station, from which brakes run regularly to the town; for a town it claims to be, with the officers and paraphernalia of a borough. It lies snug at the mouth of the Taf, the inlet where that stream and the Towy and the two Gwendraeths mix their waters with the sea. Town-street, castle, church, and quay—all have a demure air of past importance. A hundred years ago Laugharne was as busy a small seaport as you could wish to see; and in the reign of Queen Elizabeth it was counted as "one of

the six chief towns in all Wales, being then larger than Cardiff!" In William IV.'s time, if we accept the exaggerated estimate, Laugharne even passed for fashionable; a smaller Tenby, with something of a busy county town added. Miss Curtis, in her *Antiquities*, lamenting the change that had come over the place in her day, says:—

"Nearly all the wealthy and ancient families are gone. About forty to fifty years ago Laugharne presented a lively scene: the carriages of the rich rolled by its houses; in the morning and afternoon the different families walked up and down the street from the Mariners' Corner to the houses with bay windows, just past the Vicarage on the opposite side. Parties often concluded the day. Malkin, who was here in 1803, said it was the best built town in Carmarthenshire."

The same writer draws a picture of the town on market-day with the farmers and their wives and daughters, coming in from Llanboidy and other parts, on horseback, "seated on a sort of cushion called a pannel, with large bags of striped woollen stuff, some full of corn, others of oats, swung on each side of the horse. The boys made many pennies by holding their horses. The corn and oats were sold to the different storehouses, and were then shipped to Bristol." Fortunately Laugharne has not lost everything with its striped corn-bags, sea-going trade, and retired gentility. Cover Cliff and Warly Point still stretch their necks into the sea, and the path along the side of St. John's Hill still stares across at St. Ishmael's and Cefn Sidan and Worm's Head. If the Devonshire coast and Lundy Island are also seen rain may be expected shortly, say the fishermen.

Laugharne Castle is now part of a private house, and its inner works unluckily can only be seen by

special favour. Wogan Street, which leads to it, brings us to the site of one of the old gateways which made the town formidable. The outer bailey of the Castle was extended to the church gates, and there the principal gateway of the Castle stood; and another gate stood at the Mariners' corner. Wogan Street, stretching from the Castle to the Island House, represents the old street which here, as elsewhere, grew up within the shadow and under the strong arm of the Castle.

Laugharne Castle may be best seen, externally, if you walk down the beach below when the tide is out, or take boat at high water and row round the harbour. Then it still has a stern military air. Its effect, you will find, is much increased by its mixture of square and round towers—work of different periods.

An earlier castle than the present was founded by Rhys ap Gruffydd on what is said to be a Roman site. Rhys entertained Henry II. here on his return from Ireland in 1172. King Street is so called after that monarch. In 1215 the Castle was in Norman hands; for Llewelyn the Great sacked and burnt the place. Then it was, probably, that Guy de Brian began the building we now see, having already had the castlery as a grant. From the Brian family it passed to the Devereux family: then to the Herberts, Earls of Pembroke, and so to the Percys. It remained with the latter until the attainder of the sixth Earl of Northumberland, in Elizabeth's reign, when it passed to the Crown. Then Sir John Perrot, that "bold and free-tongued gentleman," who claimed to be a natural son of Henry VIII., was made castellan of Laugharne; and so remained until, in his other rôle of Irish

purgator and deputy, he was accused of uttering disrespectful words against the Queen, and encouraging the rebellion of O'Rourke and other Irish malcontents and Romish priests. He said "he had from impatience, and not from a disloyal heart, uttered words against the Queen." Popham, the Attorney-General, found him guilty, though unjustly. Leaving the tribunal, he said, "God's death! will the Queen suffer her brother to be offered up a sacrifice to the envy of his frisking adversaries?" The Queen seemed inclined to pardon him, but he expired in the Tower, September, 1592, six months after his condemnation.

The Castle stood intact until it was battered in the Civil War. Laugharne folk declared Cromwell (or the devil in his likeness) besieged the Castle in person. His soldiers raised batteries on Fern Hill, and in a field called New Park. Finally, the water was cut off, and the Castle fell; General Laugharne (whose family took their name from the place), pluckiest of turn-coats, fought on both sides, and first took the Castle for the Commons, and then held it for the King. This second siege was that when Cromwell is said to have been active. When the Castle fell it was dismantled and partly burnt by the Roundheads, whose cannon-balls have frequently been found.

Laugharne Church, St. Martin's, was another of castle-builder's design, with embattled tower. It was rebuilt, in something like its later form, by the De Brians. The interior is well worth sketching. Originally the floor rose in three separate pitches towards the altar; but this feature, with many others, has gone under the various repairs and restorings. The painted ceiling of Laugharne Church was one of "the sites of the place" when

our grandfathers went to stay there. Notice the monuments of Guy de Brian and Sir John Powel. The effigy in the north transept is that of Lady Palmer, who met with a strange death, "from a reaping-hook concealed in a hay-field." This part of the church is sometimes called "Palmer's aisle." A figure of St. George has gone from one window; a portrait of Edward III. still appears in another. An old yew-tree near the south entrance was called the "fox-tree"; and here all kinds of vermin used to be nailed. In the parish register is an account of the prices paid for the heads of the vermin.

Pendine has, I believe, the longest sands in Wales, and for two miles or more they are fine and hard and ridable, horse or cycle. They have tall cliffs and tidal caves to back them too, and many green approaches, through sea cwms, as one ranges west toward Marros. The village has no great accommodation for visitors, but the inevitable bungalow has made an entry now.

If you approach Pendine by the upper road from St. Clear's, through Eglwys Cymmyn, you have a formidable descent to make from the high grounds on the eastern side of Marros Mountain. To the wheelman this is likely to prove a snare, if he is continuing his road west. Thinking to avoid the huge ascent back to the high-road, I tried to ride the sands round to the next corner, but only to find the tide coming up at a hand-gallop; and finally I had to make an ignominious return, hauling the machine over the boulders and through salt water; and the adventure, amusing in the recollection, was a trying one. The tides at Pendine make a considerable difference, you will find, to your resources if you stay there, as they cut off the approach to the cliffs and caves

LAUGHARNE CASTLE.

Drawing by Gastineau.

To face p. 248.

by the beach round Dolwen Point. There is a footpath over the cliff shoulder, however, which you can take from the cliff road above the Spring Well.

Pendine used to be a favourite spot for the farmers to visit on their holiday-after-harvest fête, and it was a common thing to see numbers of gigs, carts, and dogcarts drawn up at the inns. The old road to Laugharne, skirting the burrows, was a very rough one. The "Laugharne Waggon," fifty years ago, was drawn by three horses abreast, and needed it, especially on market-days.

The *Pendine Cliffs* end at Gilmin Point; the name is said to be due to the fact that formerly, during the time of religious persecution, "people used to assemble here for divine worship; on one occasion a preacher named Gilman stood at the entrance of the cave, called the 'pulpit,' and preached to a thousand people. 'Beacon's Hill,' over Gilmin Point, is so called from lights having formerly been placed there, for the heartless purpose of wrecking ships. Old inhabitants 'remember the men going on horseback, with a lantern tied under the horses' heads for this object.'"

The sea-cwm at *Morva Bychan* can be surprised from the beach if the tide permit; and the hazel-copses and underwoods that vary the Marros Mountain wildness are like cool streams to the eye on a hot summer day. If the cwm is followed about half-way, and the road taken straight on when the cwm twists to the left, it brings you to the *Green Bridge*, below the new hostelry that stands on the bank. The road passes over the "Bridge"—a nine-days' wonder—but you must descend on the upper side to the stream to see its waters disappear within the magic cavity. Emerging fifty yards

further down, the stream makes its way through Morva Bychan valley to the sea.

The road for Llanddowror rises gradually as you leave St. Clear's behind, then descends again from Craig Wen. The name of a former Vicar of Llanddowror falls sooth on the ear. Griffith Jones was of those devoted souls who work, no matter what the discouragements, for the love of God and man. There is no mistaking the church, lying low on the left of the highway as you descend into the village.

The church, dedicated to St. Cringat, is a simple building, lately restored. The interior—plain nave and chancel—does not look, superficially, like that known to Griffith Jones, for its small space was in his day yet smaller, being half eaten up by high-backed pews.

When Griffith Jones came to Llanddowror in 1716, the ignorance of the country people gave a shock to his perfervid mind. He conceived the idea of bribing them—as there was great distress in the land—with halfpenny loaves dispensed in the church porch, to come to him and be taught to read the Bible at least. Out of this hungry beginning in 1730 grew the Welsh "Circulating Schools," whose masters were itinerant for a time. Then schools were stablished, village and parish, and thousands of people taught; 10,000, it is said, was the number in the year of his death, 1761. A good woman, Madam Bridget Beavan of Laugharne, aided him in the work. She it was who erected the tablet to him on the south wall of the church; and she was, at her wish, buried near his grave. His tomb is in the chancel, and was moved to make more space for the altar; but his remains actually lie under the floor of the nave, below the

communion rail. Madam Beavan left £10,000 at her death in 1779 for carrying on the schools, which money after much litigation went eventually to their maintenance.

If the wayfarer pauses under the wall of the village school on a summer forenoon he may hear, as I did, the youngsters' fresh voices chiming out a sort of babe's litany. It seemed to me the best "In Memoriam" that Griffith Jones could have.

From Llanddowror over a league of climbing road, now tracing a stream, now dividing green copses, leads on to *Red Roses*. The place is on high ground, five hundred feet above the sea, and a flying glimpse of the place promptly declares that there are no roses there. The name is akin to that of Marros Mountain, and comes from "Rhos," a moorish fell, and not from the red rose at all. Five roads cross at Red Roses. That turning off to the left winds and zigzags its way through Eglwys Cymmyn to Pendine, while another forks to the right at the upper Pendine Inn, leading to Marros village. Eglwys Cymmyn means Bleak Church (?) it is said, because of its exposed site. A monument to Sir John Perrot is in the church; and Peace Park and Parc-y-Castell in the parish recall its fighting days.

You leave the sea if you go on to *Whitland*, the Ty Gwyn or White House of Hywel Dda or Howel the Good, greatest of Welsh lawgivers. It is another instance of the way in which we still follow old habits in Wales, that Whitland, which Howel found a good meeting-place for the councillors called together out of the Welsh commots and hundreds, should now be a junction of railway lines. Whitland to-day makes little of the associations gathered about it, but it is not wonderful that the old "Ty Gwyn" has left no trace, since

it was a timber building which could be moved almost as readily as an Eisteddfod pavilion to-day. Imagine a hall, with oak and beech-trees for columns, a forked branch at the top serving to carry the long roof-tree, and side walls of stout poles and wattle-work forming the aisles. In winter a great fire burnt in the centre, its smoke rising through a "simdde louvre," or sheer opening in the thatched roof. Walls and roof were white-washed, completing this White House; and the door at the end was wide and high enough for a mounted horseman to ride in erect. Afterwards, the Abbey perpetuated the name of "Ty Gwyn ar Taf," although built on a different site from Howel's house. It was a Cistercian house; its remains make part now of a country house and its purlieus.

Having got to Whitland, you are again on the verge of romance-country. *Narberth*, a plain, demure country town at first sight, is a place of renown. The long and broad descending High Street brings you, if you persist, to the upstanding mound of the Castle Hill, and reminds you that the old Welsh name of the place was Castell-yn-Arberth, afterwards reduced to Narberth. Older people will still call it Arberth. Sir Andrew Perrot built the present Castle, which consists of a gate-way and two towers, and some dilapidated curtain and partition walls.

But the original Castell was far older. We read in the Mabinogion how Pwyll, Prince of Dyved, lord of the seven cantrevs, "was at Narberth, his chief palace, and he was minded to go and hunt, and the part of his dominions in which it pleased him to hunt was Glyn Cuch. So he set forth from Narberth that night, and went as far as Llwyn

Diarwydd. And that night he tarried there, and early on the morror he rose and came to Glyn Cuch. . . ." Later in the tale we hear of a mound above the palace called Gorsedd Arberth. This mound, to be sure, was an enchanted one; but you should turn now to the Mabinogion and read there of the "lady upon a white horse, in a garment of shining gold," who could not be overtaken, and of the wonders that she brought about. You will picture her, Rhianon, as she throws back her hood and reveals her lovely face to Pwyll, when at length she halts for him to come up with her. You will hear her then, in the time of her mysterious penance for the great crime she had not done—murdering and devouring her son!—hear her as she sits on the horse-block near the gate of the palace in Arberth, telling with downcast eye and mournful voice her terrible tale.

Grove, near Narberth, was a house of Colonel Poyer, who was shot after his brave defence of Pembroke Castle, as you will hear when we get there. The railway line, as it leaves Narberth, crosses high ground and then begins to burrow after the stream that issues at Amroth. When you reach Begelly you have Amroth two miles away on the left, and have passed by on the same side Kilgetty and its deer-park. Approaching Saundersfoot, you are running over the last patch of the coal-measures in the country, whose working is seen in sundry small collieries hereabouts. Saundersfoot village lies down in a sea-hollow, quite hidden away from the upper main road to Tenby, where you reach the limestone rock that gives the town so much of its character and waterside vantage.

CHAPTER XXIV

TENBY: THE OLD TOWN AND THE NEW—PROUD GILTAR—LYDSTEP HAVEN AND CALDY ISLAND

A STRONG fortress and a walled town, a decent borough for centuries, and an elect watering-place since about the year 1785, Tenby has, after a rather dull period during a part of last century, taken out a new lease of fame. Its name comes from the Welsh—"Dinbych y Pysgod" (small city of fishes), which truly describes its amphibious circumstance. Built on a rock, it has at high tide the salt water flowing nearly all round it; and the freshest of salt-sweet air, mild, yet not relaxing, tonic but not cold, fills its lungs. Sometimes, no doubt, the wind is boisterous, but this only makes the adventure of the Castle Hill and the High Street more amusing. Sometimes too it is said to rain (average rainfall about thirty-six inches); but this only adds to the hydropathic advantages expressed by the sea and the "Marine Baths" in St. Julian Street. Finally its coast, from Saundersfoot round to St. Govan's and the Stack Rocks, and on to Angle, is so notoriously picturesque; its rural neighbourhood is so verdurous and so becastled, that a dozen summers spent here need not exhaust its charms.

As you look on Tenby town from the Castle Hill, you may try in vain now to recall what the old walled town was like before the idle and fashionable Tenby came into being. But the old walls and towers, as one encounters them in the circuit of the old streets, still give a serious air of history to the place. The old town, says a writer who wrote before the railway came, was well fortified. One of its gates "leading towards Carmarthen is encircled with an embattled but open-roofed tower, after the manner of Pembroke. The extent of the wall on the land side, which encloses only a part of the town, is 512 yards, and the height about 21 feet; this was furnished with embrasures, and flanked by two square and five semicircular towers. The south wall rises high above the level of the sea at high water; and through one of the semicircular bastions is an entrance into the town, by a passage called Southgate, formerly defended by an iron portcullis. Northgate having fallen into decay, has been removed; hence the Old Town and Norton, or Northtown, form one continued street. Besides these gateways there are two more on the sea side, one leading to the pier, and the other to the south sand.

"The religious establishments of the town and suburbs have been numerous. There was an hospital, or free chapel, of St. John's, founded by William de Valence and Joan, his wife. A lazar-house in the suburb, dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen, was endowed about the year 1236 by Gilbert Marshal, with lands for the relief of the lepers received therein. An almshouse was commenced by Anselm, successor in the earldom to Gilbert, but not completed. A convent of Carmelite friars was founded by John de Swyne-

more in 1399, 22d Richard II., called St. Mary's College."

The South Parade still gives one an idea of the town wall, with the antique details oddly varied by the back-doors of certain inns and hostelries, which pierce it at intervals. The most curious-looking feature of the wall to-day is the gateway, called the "Five Arches." Three of these were made, however, in much later days than those when the gate was built. The original arch was that facing the South Parade, with a rounded top to it. The portcullis slot is still to be seen in the stonework. The walls, as they stand, are of various dates. One portion dates (as a wall-tablet near the fire-station shows) from Queen Elizabeth, and was built, it is suggested, by Sir John Perrot.

From Castle Hill on a clear day with a good spy-glass you can see not only Caldy Island near by, and Lundy Island far away, but you can make out Amroth Castle, Llanstephan Castle, and Kidwelly Castle, with many churches and other humbler landmarks, and see the Burry River at flood turn pale blue under the north-east corner of Gower.

The Castle ruins on Castle Hill are meagre: a rude tower of primitive aspect, with a later tower adjoining it, after a fashion to puzzle the antiquary, and a few walls of uncertain date, are all. The bare surroundings do not help to enhance the effect of the ruins.

The "Brut y Tywysogion," Chronicle of the Princes, mentions one attack at least on a still earlier castle than the present: one in 1151, when when two of the "fighting Rhyses"—Rhys and his brother Meredydd, sons of Gruffydd ab Rhys—surprised it, and put its castellan and his men to the sword. In later times, as the town grew and

strengthened its walls, the Castle was enlarged. Its final fall came in the Civil War. Bombarded by the Parliamentary ships-of-war in 1643, it was strong enough to hold its own. This was no small glory for the Pembroke men; but in 1648 another attack, more boldly and elaborately contrived, sent it down. Town and Castle passed from the King to the Commons; and the Castle was put out of the reckoning, so far as any further warfare went.

Now the Castle-keep helps to register by its gauges and glasses those things which seaside folk always find interesting—wind and weather, rain and sun—things that affect, too, the decay of towns and castle walls like Tenby's.

The monument on the left is a Welsh counterpart to the familiar Albert Memorial at Hyde Park. The arms of Llewelyn the Last, the Red Dragon of Cadwaladr, with the legend "*Anorchfygol Ddraig Cymru*" ("Unconquerable Dragon of Wales") appear upon it.

New Tenby began to be about two hundred years after the date last cited, and it owes that beginning to a gentleman who was none other than the proverbial, mythical, but in this case quite authentic, "John Jones." A doctor and a bachelor of medicine of Haverfordwest, he was the man locally to discover the sea as "a benignant hygienic and hydropathic monster." In November, 1781, the Corporation granted him a lease of St. Julian's Chapel, which stood on the old pier. This was a Sailors' and Fishermen's Chapel, intended as a place for them to confess their sins and pray before putting to sea. Now in the last half of the eighteenth century, although the rector of St. Mary's claimed toll on all fish landed, he did not trouble himself to serve the chapel. The Tneby

fishermen thereupon declared "No prayer, no fish!" and the chapel fell into neglect and was in a bad way evidently in 1780 when John Jones bethought him of the new function it might be made to serve. At any rate, he turned it into a bathing-house, and so it remained till in 1805 Sir William Paxton built his sumptuous baths. These were burnt down almost before they were occupied, but others were built in their place. In 1812 Fenton describes Tenby as a town half in ruins, and various accounts show that in the rejuvenating of the place, which went on vigorously after that, the old walls and gateways were quarried to build some of those solid Georgian terraces which still remain. It is worth note that the Carmarthen Gate, which stood where the Royal Gate House Hotel and the Lion Hotel now stand, commanding White Lion Street, was pulled down in the same year in which John Jones got his lease of St. Julian's Chapel—in 1781.

Tenby parish church commands you to halt in High Street as you enter Tudor Square. Entering, you are first attracted in the interior by the imposing flight of ten steps which lead up to the altar. The wooden roof of the chancel, richly gilt originally, was a late addition, and indeed the building is of various dates and periods, Norman to Early English, Transition to Perpendicular. The tombs provide a sort of history of the town written in stone. Here is one to the famous old burgess stock of the Whites, which is set in the arch on the right of the altar steps. Its alabaster panels are a miniature family portrait-gallery worth study, and the two marble effigies above, dressed in the costume of Henry VIII.'s time, commemorating John and Thomas White, help to

suggest the Tenby that strengthened its walls and was a fat borough. Another curious family tomb is that to the wife of Thomas ap Rees, of Scotsborough, which shows that good knight on his knees, his lady on her side, and a "praty" brood of little Reeses below. Another tomb is that of a Tenby red-gowned alderman, William Risam, who lived out his life here while Shakespeare was living his in London and Stratford. Local gossip declares that Cromwell, thinking the effigy a living man, shot at him, and that the dent of the bullet is in the wall. But the most extraordinary tomb I know is one near the entrance door in the north aisle—the effigy of the one absolute predestined ascetic in the unforgetable guise of death and emaciation, a thing not to be forgotten till the spectator is out on the south sands surrounded by the babble and gaieties of the living.

As for the amphibious delights of Tenby, are they not all duly set forth in the guide-books, which tell you, too, how to reach the Museum door, guarded by two notorious ship-heads from old wrecks? There you may see the results of the labours of the local antiquaries and others. Tenby, its frivolities notwithstanding, has always been a conscious student of itself and its neighbourhood, its bone-caves and sea-creatures; and many a rarity is lodged here as a result in this quiet corner of the old Castle buildings. In the lower room you will find strange remains of the men we know so little about—the Stone Men—with many arrow-heads, hammers, and stone lances, from the collection of a former Rector of Gumfreston, the Rev. Gilbert Smith. Notice, too, the relics disgorged by Hoyle's Mouth and the quarries of Caldy Island or dug out of Longbury Bank Cave

by the author of *Little England Beyond Wales*, Mr. Edward Laws, and Professor Rolleston. Mr. Laws once actually picked up a bone of a mammoth on the South Sands, and other surprising "finds" have been made by Tenby men.

In the same room you have a selection of the wild birds and queer sea-fowl of the Pembrokeshire coast in the Mathias Collection, and a choice array of the Tenby shells, due to the shell-hunting of Captain Lyons, who has given his name to one rare small shell, the Lyonsia. Upstairs there are moths and butterflies, coins and tokens, and a set of prints and old water-colours. The old town as it was before the advent of Dr. John Jones and Paxton and the Georgian builders is made contemporary in the water-colour drawings of Charles Norris and other pictures.

Leaving the Museum, you will be glad of a windy walk to the old pier, where there is generally some small bustle of boats and yachts coming and going, or to the Victoria Pier, where the Bristol and Waterford steamers or the Ilfracombe boat may happen to be due. Safe as Tenby Harbour and its sea-roads seem now, it has seen portents in its time. French privateers have been captured in the very harbour; pirates and smugglers have sold rare wines and fine silks to the cellars and wardrobes of Tenby.

The folk-lore and the local traditions, if they are disappearing, are not yet forgotten. You may even get a native to sing you "Says Milder to Melder," the Song of the Hunting of the Wren:—

"'Oh, where are you going?' says Milder to Melder,
'Oh, where are you going?' says the younger to the elder;

'Oh, I cannot tell,' says Festel to Fose;
'We're going to the woods,' said John the Red Nose.
'We're going to the woods,' said John the Red Nose.

'Oh, what will you do there?' says Milder to Melder,
'Oh, what will you do there?' says the younger to the elder;
'Oh, I do not know,' says Festel to Fose;
'To shoot the Cutty Wren,' says John the Red Nose.
'To shoot the Cutty Wren,' says John the Red Nose.

'Oh, what will you shoot her with?' says Milder to Melder,
'Oh, what will you shoot her with?' says the younger to the elder;
'Oh, I cannot tell,' says Festel to Fose;
'With bows and with arrows,' says John the Red Nose.
'With bows and with arrows,' says John the Red Nose."

Many wholesome seasonal customs flourished in the town of Tenby, and not so long ago. On Christmas Eve crowds used to assemble in the streets, march in procession, blowing cow-horns. Then long before "morning light" on Christmas Day the young men met with lighted torches to accompany the clergyman to the church, when the service was held which is still kept up in one or two Welsh villages and called "the Plygain." And on New Year's morning the boys and girls knocked at the house doors early with their "New Year's Water," which they drew fresh from a well and carried in a tin or mug. With it they sprinkled the persons and even all the apartments of a house in return for small coin, using little branches of evergreen for the purpose. One of the songs sung by the children who carry the

"New Year's Water" is most imaginative, most musical—

"Here we bring new water from the well so clear,
For to worship God with, this happy new year;
Sing 'Levy dew, levy dew, the water and the wine!'
With seven bright gold wires and bugles that do shine;

Sing reign of fair maid, with gold upon the toe,
Open you the west door and turn the old year go;
Sing reign of fair maid, with gold upon her chin;
Open you the east door and let the new year in.

Sing 'Levy dew, levy dew, the water and the wine!'
With seven bright gold wires and bugles that do shine."

The words *levy dew* are, some say, a corruption of the Welsh *llef' i Dduw*—cry to God! The second verse appears to figure the sun setting and sun rising, along with the going of the Old Year and incoming of the New.

You meet more geologists than you do folk-lorists at Tenby, and indeed fossil-hunters have a good hunting-field in the neighbourhood. Waterwynch Bay can be visited when the tide is at half-ebb; the cliffs there, although nothing so fine as Lydstep, make a bold setting for the small bay; the Raven Cliff and the rocks at hand suggest that the Saundersfoot coal-measures are approaching. Fossil ferns are to be had in the "Fern Rock." Beyond the Monkstone it is impossible to pass save at the very lowest of low tides, and the way back from Waterwynch to Tenby by the beach is not to be followed save at ebb of the high spring-tides.

Tenby has inland caves besides those on the shore. Hoyle's Mouth has not the charm of a sea-

washed cavern, but it is the largest and geologically one of the most extraordinary of all the limestone caves that Pembrokeshire can boast. If the little Ritec stream could be followed it would bring us to the bank where lies Hoyle's Mouth. A bicycle lamp will prove of service in exploring the interior, which extends for fifty yards in a series of chambers, the third and last of the three usually visited being the largest and finest. The view from the opening, which is wide and spacious, is very striking. The interior, once noted for its fine stalactites, has suffered in being ransacked for the bones and cave implements and the "finds" now lodged in Tenby Museum.

Local gossip declares the cave runs all the way underground to Pembroke Castle. Science says it was, like its neighbour, Longbury Bank, used of old as a cave-dwelling. Longbury Bank lies under an irregular copse-clad knoll at the top of a rough grassy ascent. The cave is pretty near the top of the bank, and a funnel opens and leads up to the field-level from its roof.

Another half-mile and you are on the verge of Lydstep Haven, whose sands lie in the crook of Lydstep Point. The caves lie beyond the Point, and you descend the cwm, passing the old lime-kiln and the quarries, to reach them—two of them right in the nose of the promontory. By following the cwm down past the upper caves to the beach, you have the "Droch" and Natural Arch on your right, and the Smuggler's Cave and two smaller tidal caverns on the left. Here the extraordinary rock-shapes and precipices are flanked by a sea-shore full of sea wonders, minute crustacean creatures and microscopic dragons.

Wandering this part of the coast, we are bound to call up again the boyish figure of Walter Savage Landor, whom we already intercepted on the shore of Swansea Bay. At Tenby he met Ianthe and Rose Aylmer—

> "Rose Aylmer whom these wakeful eyes
> May weep, but never see;
> A night of memories and sighs
> I dedicate to thee."

From Ianthe he borrowed a book which gave him the idea of his *Gebir*. Now knowing how and where he wrote it, we are led while we read to translate some of its Arabic back into Welsh scenes:—

> "I since have watch'd her in each lone retreat,
> Have heard her sigh and soften out the name;
> Then would one change it for Egyptian sounds
> More sweet, and seem to taste them on her lips
> Then loathe them: *Gebir, Gebir!*"

So, too, thinking of the poet himself, we read how Gebir—

> ". . . when his passion had subsided, went
> Where from a cistern, green and ruin'd, ooz'd
> A little rill, soon lost; there gathered he
> Violets and harebells of a sister bloom,
> Twining complacently their tender stems
> With plants of kindest pliability.
> These for a garland woven, for a crown
> He platted pithy rushes, and ere dusk
> The grass was whiten'd with their roots nipt off."

If you are fanciful enough, you may discover near Manorbier the very spot to which these lines of Landor refer.

Caldy Island, which Tenby considers her own, has latterly become again the headquarters of a religious order—the Benedictines of the English Church. The Brothers have published an account of their settlement, which, whether you accept their eremitic religious doctrine or not, you will find worth pondering. The book is called *The Benedictines of Caldy Island* (*Formerly of Painsthorpe, York*), and it is published at the Abbey there. The aims of the Brotherhood may be shortly resolved into three: "Quietism, Adoration, and Prayer!" They migrated thither in 1906 from Painsthorpe, having the Old Priory and Church of Caldy to give them temporary shelter. Since then they have built a Guest House, and made a beginning with their larger monastery. At the pleasant Guest House religious guests who are like-minded with the Benedictines, and wish for a Retreat, may stay at no great cost.

The early history of Caldy so far bears out the rude impressiveness of the Priory Church as to make good the tradition of the island. The Welsh called it Ynys Pyr, or at times Llan Illtud. Illtyd we know. Pyr is believed by Sir John Rhys to stand for Porius, the same who lies buried under a tumulus at Trawsfynydd in Merioneth. The local ties of the name are strengthened by the Lives of the Saints. In the life of Samson, Bishop of Dol, Pirus is said to have founded a monastery not far from that of St. Illtud. Allowing for the slight confusion between Llantwit Major and Caldy, we have good grounds for connecting Illtyd with the island. His pupils there, says this Book of the Benedictines, included St. Gildas; and among the companions of Gildas were St. Paul Aurelian of

Léon, St. Samson, St. David, St. Malo, and St. Brieuc. St. David in another account becomes Deiniol. The string of Breton and Welsh names is seen to be close tied when we come to trace the religious and seafaring commerce of the two lands, and the resolving of chiefs and knights into sea-hermits and of actual legends into Arthurian tales with Welsh, Breton, and Cornish backgrounds. The legend of Caldy is a very real expression of the place : it is the tale of the monk cribbed within a narrow isle, an isolated "llan," or old church-close.

CHAPTER XXV

GERALD THE WELSHMAN AND "THE FAIREST SPOT IN WALES"—MANORBIER—GERALD'S WALES—CAREW CASTLE AND THE GREAT TOURNAMENT OF SIR RHYS AP THOMAS—SLEBECH AND THE KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM

Now to the sound of a militant horn and an urgent church-bell enters the intrepid and amazing figure of Gerald the Welshman—Giraldus Cambrensis. When you reach Manorbier in the course of your travels and take the long road from the station down to the green village and the sea-cwm across which the Castle and its stern bride the Church confront one another, you are on the verge of a charmed domain. Long may the builder, the tourist, and the expropriating twentieth century keep their irreverent hands off its green places.

Gerald was born there in or about the year 1147, youngest son of Angharad and William de Barri, and grandson of Nesta, the "Helen of Wales," as she was called, and of Gerald de Windsor. He came, as you see, of the pick of two races, Welsh and Norman; and he was gifted in mind, fair in body, of heedless wit and consuming energy. His affection for his birthplace he expressed in an intensive figure—a narrowing down of the world, and of Wales to one chosen spot, Manorbier. "As

Dimetia is the fairest of the Welsh lands, and Pembroke the fairest part of Dimetia, and this the fairest of Pembroke, it follows that Manorbier is the sweetest spot in Wales."

He was a very handsome creature, and he gloried in it. "Is it possible so fair a youth can die?" asked Bishop Baldwin when he first saw him. It was with Baldwin, when he had become Archbishop, that Gerald went on the Itinerary, preaching the Crusade, which fills the best of his books. The page about Manorbier with its wild and curious Pyrric derivation of the name cannot be omitted from the chronicle:—

"The castle called Maenor Pyrr, that is the mansion of Pyrrus who also possessed the island of Chaldey, which the Welsh call Inys Pyrr, or the island of Pyrrus, is distant about three miles from Penbroch. It is excellently well defended by turrets and bulwarks, and is situated on a summit of a hill extending on the western side towards the sea-port, having on the northern and southern sides a fine fish-pond under its walls, as conspicuous for its grand appearance, as for the depth of its waters, and a beautiful orchard on the same side, inclosed on one part by a vineyard, and on the other by a wood, remarkable for the projection of its rocks, and the height of its hazel trees. On the right hand of the promontory, between the castle and the church, near the site of a very large lake and mill, a rivulet of never-failing water flows through a valley, rendered sandy by the violence of the winds. Towards the west, the Severn Sea, bending its course to Ireland, enters a hollow bay at some distance from the castle; and the southern rocks, if extended a little further towards the north, would render it a most excellent harbour for shipping. From this point of sight, you will see almost all the ships from Great Britain, which the east wind drives upon the Irish coast, daringly brave the inconstant waves and raging sea. This country is well supplied with corn, sea-fish, and imported wines; and what is preferable to every other advantage, from its vicinity to Ireland, it is tempered by a salubrious air."

The Castle buildings you see now are not those celebrated by Gerald, who was born in a much simpler building, of far less apparent consequence than that marked by the present jumble of ruins, mediæval and Tudor, set about the well-ordered lawns of a modern country house. A tower, a moated ward within a curtain wall, and possibly a gatehouse, are all we can recover of Gerald's boyish House of Paradise. The place was innocent alike of the greater walls of the military fortress and the much later domestic buildings at the south-west end, with the apartments that Mr. Cobb has restored below and the stone roof and curious chimneys above. The roof can be ascended by the stairs from the old dining-hall; its curious strong stonework would certainly have pleased Gerald, had it existed in his time. But, of course, this part of the Castle was not built till centuries later. Sceptics even say Gerald was born in a rude wooden castle built upon or near the old camp on Oldcastle Point.

If we take Mr. Cobb's account, the square south-west tower was built by the same men that built the church tower, and at a time when men were prodigal in building. Then, the curtain-wall was built over the foundations of earlier walls, and the lower chapel or crypt which dates from Gerald's time (?). Parts of the hall are, or appear to be, Norman; and the vault leading to the water-gate replaced the great beams of a wooden floor, which belonged to the Norman ponderous style of early castle-building. The square tower that flanks the gate-tower is probably early too. The gate-tower itself is later, built on the earlier bare walls, however, of an older one. The strange thing is that so much of the earlier Castle remains, while so much of the later

apartments, with enriched details certainly not Norman, has gone. What became of them? Were they carried off for farm buildings, or, most mysterious of all, shipped away to build (as an ingenious antiquary has suggested) a mansion on the opposite coast? *

Manorbier Church makes the perfect companion to the Castle. Norman in its nave and tower, it has Early English work to show in its aisles and transepts. The chantry was built some time after the tower. The tower was entered by the rood-loft or by a ladder: those who withdrew into it for defence drawing up the ladder after them. The chantry was converted into a schoolroom about sixty years ago. Which of the later kindred of Gerald is the knight whose effigy, a figure in a surcote and mail, we see in the aisle? Probably he is late thirteenth century.

Carew Castle lies over four miles slightly north-west from Manorbier. Going from Pembroke, you cross half-way the old coaching high-road to Hobb's Point, where you can see Nash Church, which has a Crusader's tomb to show you. A mile and a half further on the way to Carew you pass at Milton the head of another pill or creek of the Milford-Cleddau estuary. The next turn to the left leads to the Castle, which stands well posted above the bridge at Carew Pill, into which the Carew stream discharges.

Not many yards away from the entrance you have the shapely *Carew Cross*, left quite unprotected on the side of the road—at the mercy of every stone-throwing urchin whose energy needs an outlet. The Cross stands on a pedestal—the

* See *Arch. Camb.*, October, 1880, "Manorbere," by J. R. C.

Celtic twisted-osier ornament on the shaft much worn and rubbed. The wonder is it has not all gone long ago. The inscription has been read differently; but it may be rendered, as by Sir John Rhys, "Margitent Decett f.c.," or *fecit crucem*. Who then was Margitent? Possibly an Irish prince who lived about 950.

Entering the Castle, you find there a palpable confusion of time and architecture—old, older, oldest. The *old* is Elizabethan; and that is the square-windowed Elizabethan hall and apartments in the north of the quadrangle. This was subsequent to the days of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, and was built by another knight, Sir John Perrot, who was a great builder and in stature a great man. For *older* you have the Henry VII. Hall, which you reach at the top of the quadrangle, one of a series of great desolated apartments once occupied in state by Sir Rhys. Perrot's north wing, which makes so imposing an effect seen from over the water, was never properly finished. Then for *oldest* we have the military defences, defined by the walls at the west end and the corner towers, which are of Edwardian type. The country round about is said to have lost much of its beauty owing to the destruction of the timber after Perrot's death, and the surroundings of the Castle now hardly favour the lingering tradition of the fine deer in the deer-park of Sir Rhys ap Thomas. A tennis-court serves now as a modern equivalent for the stately gaieties at Carew when he gave his famous tournament in honour of Henry VII., whom he had attended to Bosworth Field, on his journey from Milford three years earlier.

Sir Rhys was too old to go to London for the St. George's Day celebrations there, and so he made a

"princelie fete" of his own, with a chair or throne set for the King. To it came many valorous gentlemen, famous for "theire abilities in feates of armes; and many men of prime rank who were lodged within the castle, with others of good qualitie who were lodged in tentes and pavilions pitched in the parke." The "time of jollitie" continued hospitably for five days. The first was spent in "taking a view of all the companie, choosing out five hundred of the tallest and ablest"; the second, in "exercising them in all pointes, as if they had beene suddenlie to goe on some notable peece of service"; the third, in visiting the bishop at Lamphey, and "commemorating the vertues and famouse atchievements of those gentlemen's ancestors there present"; the fourth, in holding the tournament, Sir William Herbert being the challenger, Sir Rhys "playing the judge's part"; the fifth, in hunting and hearing a sermon on loyalty, love, and charity by the Bishop of St. David's. The whole chronicle (as printed in Fenton's quarto) makes a most perfect, high-flown, delightful chapter of romance. We read how the "justes and tournamentes," the "knockes valerouslie received and manfullie bestowed"; the wrestling, hurling of the bar, taking of the pike, and running at the quinteine, were ever and "anone seasoned with a diversitie of musicke." And although many prides and rivalries must have lurked in this feast of Carew—"among a thousand people there was not one quarrell, crosse worde, or unkinde looke that happened between them."

Carew Castle and its estates were mortgaged by Sir Edmond Carew to Sir Rhys ap Thomas. The Carew family were Geraldines, descended from Gerald of Windsor and the Princess Nest, whose

marriage portion Carew was. Their son William took the name Carew (Welsh, Caerau—forts). On the disgraceful attainder of Rhys's grandson by Henry VIII., the estates were leased to Sir Andrew Perrot, and then back to the Carew family, in whose possession they long remained.

Carew Church, a fourteenth-century Decorated church with an earlier tower, lies close to the road that leads back from the Castle to Lamphey, in that part of the parish called Carew Cheriton. The church has many tombs of famous folk, Crusading lords of Carew and others. The north transept was used as a sort of family chapel for the Castle at one time. Another chapel, now a vestry and schoolroom, stands in the graveyard, and the fine old rectory house over the road now serves Cheriton Farm.

If you care to extend your journey up to Cleddau you can go by Jeffreson, Yerbeston, and Martletwy to Landshipping Quay, and there cross the ferry. Over it lie Picton Castle and Slebech; on gaining the Ha'rfordwest high-road from Narberth you turn east to the latter place, or west to the former, as you may prefer. A rough short-cut leads up from Slebech Park, past the fish-ponds, to Slebech New Church on the hill above; but who cares to see a new church when old ones are to be had? The Eastern Cleddau, up from Slebech Bridge, is richly wooded, a resort for some rarer birds that have bred there for time immemorial. You need a canoe, and a few lazy days, to explore the Cleddau and get to know its waterside creatures.

A good inland voyage from Hobb's Point is that to Carew Castle, some five miles away. Taking boat at the Neyland ferry, you follow the Milford Cleddau main channel, passing at the end of the

first mile the old Pembroke ferry to Burton; then rounding Burton Mountain—a very small mountain—and so as far as Lawrenny ferry, where you turn right and pass the quay, turning away from Benton Castle. It is almost worth landing at Lawrenny to see the church, which has a true "Pembroke tower." Benton Castle can be seen when boating up to Ha'rfordwest; but it is not held to be a tourist's castle, although both the ruin and the demesne about it are worth exploring. Lawrenny does a good deal of trafficking from its quay still. It had at one time a fat oyster-bed in the estuary. The Castle at Lawrenny, as it is sometimes locally termed, is the modern castellated mansion, built on a site long associated with the Burton family, which stands embowered in Lawrenny Park. Upton Castle, due south of it, is passed on your left as you paddle up Carew Pill. Upton was once a fair castle, that served as the seat of the famous old Pembroke family, the Maleufants. It shows only the ruins of the gatehouse towers to-day and the interesting chapel of Upton, a chapelry of Nash Church. The chapel has some curious tombs of the Maleufants and Bowens, and a singular detail: a clenched fist taper-holder or bracket in the north wall. If you are adventurous enough to sail without a pilot up these creeks, you must be careful to bear right and south-west, avoiding the Cresswell creek after you pass Lawrenny, and left all the way when you reach the narrowing strait above Upton, avoiding Ford Pill on the right and Ratford Pill in the middle, and keeping the left-hand channel of the three. Then, unless you watch the tide, you will be likely to run aground at points, and be stuck in the mud. Should you decide to explore the Cresswell creek,

you might find yourself investigating the top-slime of the coal-measures, were you to linger too long at Cresswell (Christ's-well).

After making the most of the waterways in this holiday neighbourhood, you will or ought to find that, of all its places, it is Slebech affects your fantasy most, asks closer acquaintance and draws you back to its approaches. Here at Slebech was an old house and commandery of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, who, from being simple hospitallers in that sacred city, were fired to become knights-errant with a charter wide as "Christentie." There is no space here to dilate on the power of their open and secret confraternity: the reader who would like to know what their effect must have been on the mediæval life of this region may turn to the very striking articles by Mr. Rogers Rees in *Archæologia Cambrensis*, based upon original researches.

CHAPTER XXVI

PEMBROKE CASTLE — COLONEL POYER — MONKTON PRIORY CHURCH—PEMBROKE DOCK—LAMPHEY AND THE EARL OF ESSEX

If you are a castle-lover you will tarry one long day at least at Pembroke, to make acquaintance there with its superb great fortress. The fair, rural, peaceful neighbourhood near about it helps to set it off. But it has, too, a change of wild and waterside scenery, sea and river—Milford Haven, Carew Castle, the Stack Rocks, Nangle, St. David's. Those who make any longer stay may be pleased even, though they are not antiquaries, at the idea of playing lawn tennis within the walls of an old castle, and crying "fifteen-love!" where long ago the young squires shot at the mark. The last, best remembered fatal association of the walls, the siege of 1648, the death of Colonel Poyer, lend them only pensive memories now.

If you arrive by train, you have to traverse the whole length of the town, and the apparently endless High Street, before you see the Castle. On the way you will take due note of the parish church of St. Mary, curiously built-in by the neighbouring houses at the corner of Dark Street and opposite the Lion Hotel. Notice the Chapel of St. Thomas on the west side of the building; here

I believe, lies the body of a murdered knight who figured in romance. If you still persist, you leave two or three shops and a subterranean newspaper office on your right, and then spy at once the entrance to the Castle on the same side.

The Castle is set on a strong natural site, a limestone rock, rising some fifty feet from the river, which, with its fork to the west, Monkton Pill, surrounds it with water at very high tides for two-thirds of its circuit. Five towers and five bastions surrounded and kept the outer court; and behind the chief tower, or keep, the inner ward was placed at the corner, best protected by the river and river-cliffs from attack. Before the days of cannon and mortars the place must have been almost impregnable—by open assault at any rate.

On entering to-day by the gatehouse at the south-east corner, you have to keep directly opposite across the great outer court, over one hundred yards across. The gatehouse, defended by its two strong towers, was arranged to be partly independent of the keep and the cluster of domestic buildings about the keep. The oldest parts of the Castle abut on the keep, which is climbable. From the top you have a bird's-eye view of the whole surroundings, and if it be full tide you have a notable long stretch of water before you, far along the wide miles of Milford Haven, skirting the Pwllcrochan Flats, as well as the town pill or creek, and the Monkham pill close below. To the north Precelly Mountain and, a little left of it, Vrenny Vawr are to be seen when the air is clear. Towards Tenby you have a sea-vista opening between the high grounds and the two ridges formed by the Ridgeway on the left and the

Portclew hills on the right, and the range of coast where the latter runs out, from Swanslake to Caldy. Nearer at hand, behold across Monkton Priory the trees of Orielton and the Castleton ridge.

The nose only of the castle-peninsula was first fortified, the gateway then being to the right of the keep as you look across the large outer court to the gatehouse. Now, having been as high as you can get on the tower-top, you can go down below to the Castle cavern, or Wogan—Welsh, "Ogov" (ogovan) —a cave. This is to be reached through the North Hall, whence a flight of steps and a dependent rope on the far side conduct you to it. The fine window in the wall was opened some years ago by Mr. Cobb. The water-gate, or sally-port, as he suggests, appears to have had no portcullis or other defences such as the imaginary castle-builder of to-day would expect to have found. To envisage the water-gate from without you must follow the path round the water-side. The "Wogan" measures some thirty-six paces long by twenty-eight wide. Possibly it was some kind of cave-dwelling first of all: then Briton and Roman used a part of the Castle rock for a fort; the Welsh re-used it; so did the Normans. As you explore you gradually unfold in Pembroke Castle the intermittent legend in stone of its broken history.

We may note that the interior height of the keep is 75 feet, and that its hugeous walls ranged from 17 to 19 feet thick at its base, and from 14 feet 6 inches to 12 feet 6 inches at the first and second floor levels. The top is domed. Its arrangements are all plain and contemptuous of all our ideas of comfort through its five stories. Its builder, says Mr. Cobb, "must have had ideas

like those of the builders of the Great Pyramid." There is some Egyptian mystery about it, too, to the modern spectator. What did the people do in it? How did they contrive to live in it? Truly it is almost impossible to conceive that this tower was the seat of almost regal state. But there it stands—"the heart of Pembroke," as one has called it; "the keeper of the King's haven," another; and deserving certainly to count among the nine wonders of South Wales. You must not forget the Castle was but the main knot and warder of the Pembroke fortifications. Leland wrote: "The towne is well waulled and hath iii gates, by est, west, and north, of the wich the est gate is fairest and strongest, having a faire but a compasid tour not rofed, in the entering whereof is a portcolys, ex solido ferro." Of these erections there are now but very imperfect remains; the north gate alone is still in tolerable repair.

"A slender fortress of stakes and turf" was the beginning of Pembroke Castle, according to Gerald the Welshman. This was erected by Arnulf de Montgomery in Henry I.'s reign. But before that Cadwgan of Bleddyn is said to have twice besieged a castle of Pembroke, which he twice failed to take. It seems, too, no very solid or convenient hold stood here in the early twelfth century, because Gerald de Windsor (grandfather of Gerald the Welshman) is said to have built a new Castle of Pembroke then, on a site called Congarth Vechan. Is it possible this site of the new Castle was the present site? ("Congl-garth-fechan," what can one make of that?) Wherever this Castle was, it was the scene of one of the wildest exploits in Welsh history—the abduction of Nest by Owain

(ap Cadwgan ap Bleddyn). Nest was the daughter of Rhys ap Tewdur, and considered the most beautiful woman of Wales in her time. When she was still very young she had been married diplomatically to Gerald de Windsor; and it can be imagined what excitement this alliance between two famous Welsh and Norman houses caused in Wales. Nest's beauty was a theme for song, and when her kinsman Cadwgan gave a great feast at Cardigan, her fame was so extolled there that his son Owain, filled with wonder and excitement, decided upon a visit to Pembroke Castle to see her. Her beauty proved more than he could bear to see, and he formed then the wild idea of returning suddenly with a strong force, attacking the Castle, and carrying her off. Wild as the scheme was, it succeeded perfectly. Gerald, surprised, narrowly escaped with Nest's aid, while she and her children, and "much plunder," were carried off by Owain to his castle in Powys-land.

But we must o'erstep the Middle Ages now, to the great siege of Pembroke town and castle, in Cromwell's time; following his successful sieges of Chepstow and Tenby, the latter on the 31st of May, 1648. On the 6th of June following a letter of that date says Cromwell has subdued all Wales except Pembroke Castle, and that the townsfolk have "their horses and cows on the thatch of their houses." On the 14th Cromwell describes their firing houses in the town—"the fire runs up the hill and much frights them." Finally, after some desperate sallies, when Cromwell's side lost heavily, the water was cut off from the pipes (some of the pipes are in Tenby Museum), secretly laid to the Castle over the Mill Bridge, and provisions having

given out, town and Castle were surrendered on July 11th. Poyer, the hero of this defence, who had fought previously for Cromwell, was the last to suffer for its stubborn maintenance. He and Laugharne and Powell were doomed: then the sentence was compromised, and only one was to die. Lots were drawn by a youngster: the fatal lot fell to Poyer, and he was shot in Covent Garden, in the Piazza, April 21, 1649. One of the saddest of family mottoes is that taken in consequence by the Poyer family: "Sors est contra me"—"Fate's against me."

Like Carnarvon, Pembroke Castle is not quite sure in which of its towers a prince was born.

Leland says: "In the atter ward I saw the chaumbre wher King Henry VII. was borne, in knowledge whereof a chymmeney is new made, with the arms and badges of Henry vii."

An apartment in the keep is now pointed out usually as his, but it is conjectured that the southern towers are more likely to have been the King's quarters, as they show some signs of Tudor alterations and adornments. Henry II. and John were among the royal visitors here too. The builder of the later Edwardian outer castle, the North Hall, was probably Montchesny, who was castellan about 1300.

On leaving the Castle you can go down Westgate Hill, and instead of crossing Monkton Bridge, walk right round the Castle under the walls, and emerging on the quay, cross Mill Bridge, where, when the water is well up, the picture is luminous and delightful in contrast—floating masonry and painted water. If bound for Monkton Priory, you cross the Monkton Bridge at the foot of Westgate, and then turn to the right up the bank, when you

see the Priory Church above you, whose great length is imposing.

The unusual length of the church is balanced by the fine tower. It was designed for two congregations, one of the Priory, the other of the parish. For long the former part, the choir, was in ruins, but is now restored. The tower-top is said to command a superb view of the town and Castle opposite and the country adjacent. The building has marked Norman structural points, but the windows and details are Early English. The Priory farm has little of the old prior's lodging left now. Sixty or seventy years ago, remains of the cloisters were to be seen. The cloisters, it is evident, must have added greatly to the architectectural effect of the whole.

The Priory was originally attached to the House of Jayes in Normandy. The Prior's Hall, as it has sometimes been called, standing on the hill approaching, has a long, low, vaulted chamber on the ground-floor, partly cut out of the solid rock—now used as a schoolroom—and other chambers above, one with a fine fireplace. A rough outer staircase, leading to the upper chambers, existed up to about thirty years ago. A little later the whole was restored by Mr. Cobb, of Brecon. There are traces of other old buildings in Monkton, which point to a priory suburb worthy of the castellated town over the water.

Pembroke had a very fine reputation for pirates, or for its dealings with them, in Elizabethan days. Among them, the name of Edward Herberde, who was the great Sir John Perrot's man formerly, opens the longest and strangest episode. Herberde captured a ship with a salt cargo belonging to a Dutchman—Peter Muncke, and put some of his

men aboard her. Next night a storm separated the two vessels, and Herberde's rascals took the prize into Milford Haven, and actually sent the unhappy Dutch skipper with two of the crew into the town to sell the salt. The town was Pembroke. The mayor, however, thought the affair suspicious; Muncke's face spoke volumes; and a word aside with him explained. The mayor made some pretext of offering the salt to Sir John Perrot at Carew, and repaired thither with the Dutch skipper and one of the Herberde gang. Sir John was delighted at the chance of booty and a legal swoop, and he and the Mayor and the Dutchman devised a night raid. Two boats put off in the dark, the first containing Muncke, a Captain Hinde in Sir John's service, and one Rice Thomas. Sir John and ten or twelve men followed in the second. Muncke called out as his boat drew near to his own sailors on board to seize the ship. A cry of "Sir John Perrot!" followed. Three or four of the rascals escaped in a boat. The rest were captured and taken prisoner to Harfat. When the booty came to be divided Sir John got the lion's share, half the salt—five tons of it going to the Mayor. The ship and her tackle were divided between two Vaughans —John "the customer," and Richard, deputy of Sir William Morgan, Vice-Admiral of South Wales. Muncke had half the salt for his solace, but he disappeared before the trial of the pirates came on at Haverfordwest Assizes, and Judge Fetyplace set the rascals free. The end of Herberde was grim enough. He had brought in a captured cargo of Gascon wines, which Kift (fine name for a sea tale, Kift!) the local Admiralty man had seized and sold to Sir John at £7 a tun. Then Herberde was deserted by his own men, who no doubt counted

him an unlucky leader. He went to lodge not far from Haroldston, where Sir John was residing at the time, and the knight's threats and oaths uttered against and about him so terrified him, that he cut his throat in his lodging. This was no man for a pirate's life, you may think; but then Sir John's oaths were tremendous even for Elizabethan times. He owed it to his royal sire perhaps—but this is no page for scandal.

Beyond old Pembroke lies the new Pembroke of the dockyards. One thinks of Lewis Morris—Lewis o Fon, and of his coast and harbour survey, as one explores the place, or standing at the ferry there, watches a marvellously nimble and infernal-looking electric-boat dash up to the landing, the water a-wash over her bows, drop an officer ashore, and go off again at reckless speed. One thinks of him because he, being a man of imagination and of large constructive ideas, who thought in lead-mines and sea-harbours, as well as in lyric measures and prose idioms, saw the opportunities of the Welsh coast long before the official folk in London did. In 1742 we find his brother William speaking of him as the "hydrographer," and five years later he himself writes about the maps he is drawing. He was appointed Surveyor by the Admiralty in 1737, and in 1748 published his *Plans of Harbours, Bars, Bays, and Roads in St. George's Channel.*

One summer evening we were tempted to *Lamphey Palace* (pron. Lanffey) on our road Tenby-wards, being arrested by the aspect of Lamphey village, graciously framed by the trees of Lamphey Court. We found a back-way opposite the church, which served as a short-cut, and intercepted the wide sweep of the drive across the park.

Not being sure of our right of entry, we felt rather like Welsh cattle-raiders as we skirted the old wall beyond, bordering the orchards and kitchen gardens, and then looked up to see the east window of the chapel staring at us out of an ivied visage across the green close. The Palace itself, as Gower left it in 1335 or so, may have consisted of the arcaded hall and an older chapel with irregular outlying buildings. All is not to be safely attributed to Bishop Gower, but certainly the arched parapet is his and the detached outlook tower. The chapel is due to another and later hand (some say Bishop Vaughan). It is a Perpendicular building ranged above a ruined cloister. The Lamphey stream that runs by the Palace becomes the Pembroke River. The original Welsh name, to quote Fenton, was Llanfydd—"the Welsh for *Fanum Sanctæ Fidei Virginis*—dedicated to St. Faith." "The first instrument I have seen dated from this place is one of Bishop Richard de Carew, A.D. 1259; and from that time the occasional residence of almost all the bishops there in succession may be traced, particularly of Gower, Adam Hoton, and Vaughan."

One or two larger apartments, reached by steps or a ladder from without, including the so-called Red Chamber and the reception Hall, show that the Palace was one of much state.

The parish church of Lamphey village we did not visit. It has an old font and piscina worth seeing, they say. Here lived in his susceptible years—and it is a memory no place could forget—the great Earl of Essex, under the protection of his kinsman, Richard Devereux, in whose favour Henry VIII. had alienated the manor. He came of a gifted, comely, dangerous house. His story

is in part that of Hamlet (for his mother's intrigue with Leicester, and his father's death, believed by many to be by poison, brought tragedy into his very childhood). But his early temper was gay; his spirit valorous and ambitious; and if he had a dash of poetry, he was not moody, save by moments. In his youth he had a rare and beautiful spirit, according to those who knew him: it is the finer image of young Robert Dudley that you see stamped on the green arras of Lamphey. Like Pryderi in the Welsh tale of this country-side, he was brought up as carefully as was fit, so that he became the fairest youth and the most comely, and the best skilled in all good games of any in the kingdom.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE BOSHERSTON ROAD—SIR GAWAIN AND ST. GOVAN'S CHAPEL—HUNTSMAN'S LEAP AND THE STACK ROCKS—ANGLE—A YOUNG SEAL

It was a changeable, untrustable morning, the 26th of September. The wind was veering east to south-east, and rain fell at Whitland, fell heavily. Then at Pembroke came a glimpse of watery sunshine. No one could have told how the afternoon would turn out when we left Pembroke about one.

We dropped out of the town, crossing the line of the rusty old town-walls at its back, to the river, which reflected a sky watery as itself. Once over the bridge, we fell to debating the two roads to Bosherston: one shorter and rougher, one longer and smoother? At that moment I spied a man with a drover's whip going in the same direction. He replied with a husky, eagerly friendly voice—and a new variety of the Pembrokeshire speech—to David's salute.

Yes, he knew Bosherston well, and St. Govan's. Indeed, he knew "every sheep-thrack in the country, from Holyhead down to Chepstow!"

His face was Celtic; he spoke Welsh, though the most of the people in this shore did not; he knew the country-side like a native. But

when David asked, "Beth yw'ch enw chi ynte?" he answered, Michael O'Brien.

He had led a roving life. First he served in the army; then came three heart-breaking years on the sick-list, and he seemed done for altogether. At last he chanced to take a drover's place, and the open road and the fresh air gradually cured his army ailments and ague; and now he had led the life long enough to have travelled all over Wales and Ireland, and well up into Scotland too. He wore a brick-red kerchief round his throat, which gave a touch of colour to his figure, otherwise all of a drover's dusty brown. He talked, delighting in his own voice, with an expressive rush of words, slightly aspirating his s's:—

"Kilkenny's the shnuggest small town in the whole counthry. Stands well it does, and looks well. Not a big place: five or six thousand, that's about all. 'Tis a nice-lookin' little town, ah, 'tis that. A man could'n' wish for a nisher."

He knew the difference between north and south-country Welsh; but here there was no Welsh, and poor enough English.

"I'm working for a sheep-farmer now; an' he's a Welshman; an' he can't speak a word of Welsh; but I CAN!" he said this ending with a triumphant crescendo. He told us what turns to take for the quicker of two roads to Bosherston, and we parted at the gate of a sheep-field. Two miles further on, and down came the rain again, with the wind going round in the south-west—rain that was spilt from a bucket, wetting one through in a few minutes. We sheltered from it under some ash-trees—and very poor shelter ash-trees make. In ten minutes it was over.

The best prelude to the treeless tract of coast

from St. Govan's to the Stack Rocks is to skirt the plantations of Stackpool Court. We sped fast, by the winding, skirting, slow-descending road, past a mile of woodland and parkland that begged for lazy days and a long acquaintance. The figure of Sir Gawain, a ghost in rusty armour, ought to start there :—

> ". . . On the morne merrily he rides
> Into a forest full deep, that was wondrous wild."

But the fear of more rain and the thought of Gawain's or St. Govan's Chapel drew us on. At Bosherston the wind was terrific, and gave one a wildish idea of what was to come. However, there was a lull as we reached the cliffs, and the setting of the chapel, built across the sea-cwm so as effectually to close it up, was like nothing else we had seen on any coast and made us forget the gale.

The strangeness of the site, indeed, is such as to make one remember that the tribal chiefs who became hermits were given to fix their hibernating cells in places of utter isolation. The story of Sir Gawain needs humouring to be adapted to suit all the necessities of the case. The later romances say he was buried at Dover Castle, while William of Malmesbury says he lies at Rhoose in this shire; and the geography of his life is equally puzzling. But then romance figures are a kind of composite portraits, and Gawain underwent more changes than most of them. His names, Gwalchmai, Walwayne, Gawain, Gowan, Govan, Galvanus, &c., suggest it. His literary pedigree is longer than Arthur's; his character goes through wild transmigrations; he is fearless, chivalrous, devoted;

cruel, treacherous, faithless. His decadence, it is significant to note, begins with his attachment to the story of the Sangraal. However, to connect him with St. Govan and place him in the saints' calendar, we have to recall that he touches St. David. At St. David's Cathedral there is a misericord which shows a curious deep-bottomed ferry-boat, one of whose passengers is overtaken by sea-sickness. This hero, according to tradition, is St. Govan. The clue is enough to relate him to his chapel as a sea-hermit who went and suffered by sea. That afterwards his roving and predatory life and adventures were worked up in romance, while his sanctity was forgotten, is nothing. The making of the romantic lay-figure out of an old tribal chief is often a most erratic process, subject to the dullness of one redactor and the vagaries of another.

A very impressive folk-tale, one which would have appealed to Tolstoi, is told of St. Govan's.

Once a farmer was sowing barley in the down-land above the chapel when he saw a stranger of noble mien who stood by watching him.

"That seed you are sowing will decay," he said at length.

"Yes," said the farmer, "it will rot, sure enough; but it will spring again, and at harvest-time I will come and gather the ripe grain with my sickle."

"Do you believe that which is dead can come to life and live again?"

"I do."

"Then," said the stranger with an air of majesty, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Go then, fetch thy sickle and cut thy corn."

The farmer went. On his return the stranger

had gone. But the barley which he had sown was ripe and ready for cutting that same day.

The essential thing at St. Govan's is to believe in the Saint's reality; a man torn by passions, who fasted and fought the flesh and the devil for a time in this strait cleft by the sea. The other alternative is to turn vandal and tourist, and in contempt throw a stone into the desecrated holy well, where so many a poor creature came to kneel and pray and, with clay on the blind eyes or the hurt limb, hope for cure.

A wilder sou'-westerly gale we could not have wished for, to lend expression to a wild coast, than that we met on reaching the cliff-top again; we felt its full fury in crossing the head of each successive chasm, up which it blew with tremendous buffets that fairly made one stagger. And the sea, running in with immense ocean-waves at an angle, struck the rocky spurs with a force that sent white sheets up to the top of the cliffs and scattered foam like snow on our coat-sleeves. It was a delicious experience to lie down on the jutting brink of the cliff at some sharper edge and watch this foam and taste the salt spray, waiting for the terrific ninth wave that should out-top nature. That is a sensation you can get, no doubt, on other parts of this coast. But rifts like the Huntsman's Leap are quite outside one's ordinary experience. "They wait," says one traveller, "for their victim with a stealthy pretence of guileless grass and smooth turf. A narrow ditch you think you can jump opens at your feet: *subterque cavis grave rupibus antrum et vacuum*—it is sixty fathom deep, and he that slips is lost."

The story of Huntsman's Leap is that the

hunter following the hounds made a short-cut, as he thought, in full career, and coming suddenly to the cleft leapt it safely. But his nerves could not stand that horrid glimpse of the earth's rent abyss and watery entrails, and he died from the sheer after-gust of the experience. The story is about as old as St. Govan's Chapel; but in our time a young man deliberately attempted the leap, slipped his foot, and "came off" as the climbers say, with what result you may imagine. The dry, slippery turf in hot weather is far more treacherous than the actual stone edges that warn you away.

Though there were fresh wheel-marks on the rough road westward from Huntsman's Leap, we did not see a soul all the way to the Stack Rocks. An old limekiln on the cliffs in one place, a ruined cottage or two a little inland, and some sheep in a seaward field—these were our only company.

We were afraid we had passed the Stack Rocks, when approaching a coast-guard's look-out cabin we spied the gap where they stand. The sea-birds we had been told to expect there in clouds were not to be seen. Only one or two grey gulls were flying wild a short pitch away. The sea made up for all lack of bird-life. Had we not been so hungry we could have watched it for hours break and shatter itself on the rocks below, for there was something hypnotising in the coil and recoil of the breakers.

Another mile after passing the Stack Rocks, you reach the tremendously built outpost of this limestone peninsula at Linney Head. After that the limestone gives out, and the Old Red Sandstone puts in at Freshwater Bay.

We were too tired by our battle with the wind

to go and look for the old forts near this corner. The last indignity it offered was to blow out David's matches when he tried to light a pipe. So, without waiting to see Brownslade or the Brimstone Rock, we gave up the struggle and turned our backs on it, with Castle Martin and a hoped-for Castle Inn for goal. We rode fast, the wind behind us, and presently beyond a wide dip saw an imposing church tower and spire; "no doubt Castle Martin!" It proved to be Warren: a farm-house and a few cottages were the only community, and there was no inn or shop to be seen. Another mile took us to Castle Martin. But again there was no inn; and we were advised in our state of ravening hunger to apply at a cottage in a lane. Its mistress was taken by surprise, but a good toasting-fire provided toast and a teapot, while a village ancient sat by and told us there were no inns on the Stackpool estate, and the nearest was at Angle.

"There," said he, "you can have your tay if ye like on the housetep: for 'tas a flat roof to it."

It was almost twilight when we took the road for Angle, and luckily the wind had dropped with the day. The road crossed a wildish stretch of high moorland, then dropped to the sea, where our wheels ran through soft sand. A climb brought us to high ground again for another short mile from which the descent was steep and tree-darkened, toward Angle and its bay. The lights were twinkling there in the cottage windows as we ran by three soldiers and reached the village. The inn was dark. A rather dubious lad came to the door, who did not hold out much hope of accommodation. The only parlour downstairs was full of soldiers talking noisily about

South Africa, so we made our way into a long, high-raftered kitchen, with a very hot outstanding stove in full blast. On the table were pots of newly-made blackberry-jam; a small, pretty child, a girl of four, was playing with some toys; a fine yellow collie called Nell came in, and threw herself down by the stove.

The heat soon drove us out into the common-room, where a young fisherman sat drinking a pint of ale. We fell into talk about the fishing, the forts, the soldiers, and so forth. Presently, for want of something better to say, I asked if they ever came on seals in these waters?

His reply surprised me: "Ye can see one now at Mr. Boothës'!"

It appeared that a young seal had been caught and killed on the rocks near the bay that afternoon by Tom Boothës. Later in the evening a youngster volunteered to guide me to his house at the upper end of the village.

The boy took me under the stars to a dark door of an apparently darker house. A girl, as she seemed, slight, black-haired, pretty, came to the door, and asked us in.

The dead seal lay in a back-kitchen—a small pool of red blood on the flags at his grey, kitten-like head. He was very light grey in colour, with pale buff bands or patches relieving the body-colour, and he was surprisingly fat. The scene with the young mistress of the house standing there, naked candle in hand, and throwing the light on the poor little beast, was not one for a mere scribe to describe. We were still examining it, when its captor returned. He did not know how to skin it, or whether to sell it, or what to do with it. His wife was more practical.

She had often skinned birds and rabbits. "If you could skin a rabbit, you could skin a seal," she said.

There was another pause, for Boothës had three confederates who must be consulted.

The conference took place in the dark road under the stars, and the result was the four men undertook to skin the seal and bring the skin to the inn that night. They discussed the operation with extraordinary gravity, as one that might easily be rendered fatal.

"See here," said the smallest of the four, whose face I could not discern, "you have to keep all his fat on, else the skin 'ull speal; and some 'ill keep his fins, and some wint. 'Tis a ticklish thing; ye ought to allow for that, mister!"

Finally, the price agreed, I went back to the inn, and being tired out, waited a while and so to bed. Towards midnight the seal-captors arrived with the skin, and next morning we dressed it inside with rough salt, and packed it up. It weighed over thirteen pounds, fat and all, and the Post Office refused it as overweight. So Mercury and I had perforce to carry it all the way to Pembroke in a cardboard box, which caused many people to stare at us mildly *en route*.

Mr. Whiting, of Hampstead, to whom the skin was sent to be cured, was not very hopeful about it. September was the wrong season, and this was the wrong kind of seal. However, his skill saved it. But I do not encourage others to take Welsh seals: they are too human in their spirit.

George Owen, in his *Description of Pembrokeshire*, gives a curious account of seals and their fur in his chapter on "the severall sorte of fishe taken in this shire."

The seal is "broad-pawed" he says, "like to the moale," and it "cometh to land to rest and sleep and lie together in herds like swine one upon another; and at byrth time, as Plynie saieth cometh a land and is delivered and giveth sucke to the yonge, till he able to swymme wch he saieth wilbe in xij daies. . . . The fawne at the first is white, and is more delicate meate than his Ancestor being strong and fullsome to eate. Yet is yt accompted a dayntye and a rare dishe of manie men. This fishe is verie fatte, as Bacon, and the skynne serveth to manie uses being dressed, especiallie in tymes past for covering of tentes, because yt receiveth no hurt by lightninges as saieth Plynie, li, 2 cap. 55. And saieth Rondele—this li. 46, cap. 6, the here of the seale stareth at the south windes, and goeth smooth wth the North; but certaine yt is yt doeth so at the fflood and ebbe, staring with the one and smoothing with the other."

To stare is to become stiff and stark. With the seal George Owen ranks the "Porpisse" and the "Thornepole," or the porpoise and grampus. All three, he says, "being ravenouse by nature followe the sculls [shoals] of heringes feeding on them, and are often taken wrapped in the herring-nets."

The only other seal I have come across in South Wales was off Dinas Island, North Pembrokeshire. But that episode belongs to another page.

The Welsh for a seal is "moelrhon"—bald-tail, shortened into "molrho." Gwilym Dyved speaks of the creature in one of his odes:—

"Bald-head, bald-tail,—see him rise!
Ware him: he hath woman's eyes;
Ware him, where he lies asleep.
Years before he knew the deep,
Three salt tears his change began
When he changed from mortal man."

CHAPTER XXVIII

MILFORD AND MILFORD HAVEN—GEORGE OWEN OF HENLLYS — DALE—BRUNT FARM — MARLOES — SKOMAR ISLAND

COUNTING on American liners or revived dockyards, Milford in its time has suffered many disappointments. Finally, having seen its last whaler go to Dundee or otherwhere, it has settled down to a pretty secure trawling business, and owns a fair fleet of steam trawlers, which transfer their fish to the Great Western Railway at its terminus here. So Milford mackerel, I suppose, may yet become as much a proverb as Yarmouth bloaters. The Haven's vast natural advantages, and its chances of yet negotiating a new great Transatlantic line, give the town, the Haven, and whole neighbourhood a potential air.

The town station is set back in the cwm or valley of Priory Pill, rather inconveniently placed for the town, which spreads its streets mathematically on the rising ground above. If you want a bird's-eye view the small hill of Hubberston, about a mile west, to be gained viâ Dock Street and the Quay, commands at a glance the town, the Haven, and its surroundings.

Milford Haven was for long the one proverbial

great harbour of British tradition. Kings embarked there for Ireland; Shakespeare often chose it as the scene of the coming and going of his characters, such as "Cymbeline." People can be found, indeed, who believe Shakespeare himself visited Milford. As for Nelson, there is no doubt at all about his visit after the Battle of the Nile, when he was hero of the seas. Milford the port began its career through the direct agency of Lady Hamilton's husband—Sir William—and his nephew, Charles Greville, who succeeded to the property. The new hotel built in Nelson's honour, "The Lord Nelson," no longer looks new. Sir William Hamilton lies buried in the church which Greville built,—and it contains a red porphyry vase inscribed to Nelson's memory.

The Haven can be best explored by boat from Milford Quay. Seizing the tide, it is possible to sail down to the mouth of the harbour, get a glimpse of both the Block Houses, and return in an afternoon. The water excursions beyond Neyland and Pembroke in the Cleddau estuaries and pills are endless.

George Owen, of Henllys, gives in his Pembrokeshire records a most quotable account of Milford Haven in 1595. "And for forme," he said, "the havon may well be likened to the picture of some greate crooke and forked Tree having many branches and bunches some greate some litle groweinge even up from the butt to the Toppe; and the same branches being lopped and cut off, some neere and some farre from the bodye of the Tree (from the crookednes downe) the picture of such tree might soe be drawne as the same should well describe the true forme of this harborowe and every branch and creeke thereof." Modern maps do not show the "forked Tree" so well as the map George Owen made of the Haven; but if the map of Pembrokeshire is turned so that the east forms the top of it, instead of the

SKOMAR ISLAND.

From a drawing by Mr. T. H. Thomas.

north, the resemblance is clear enough. George Owen was anxious to have the harbour fully fortified. The Block Houses at Dale and Nangle were prompted by a similar fear of invasion. Some of his names, such as Prix Pill, for Castle Pill, and the Carne, for the Carrs, have been altered since his day. The "Haking," which is the Milford Pill in especial, is by him called the Priory Pill. He describes it as "a creeke that turneth uppe on the Easte parte of Hubberston pointe and reacheth up farre into the land untill the Priory house being a myle in the land, yt it is all owse" (ooze, or mud), "and therefore no good landing there. This pill is dry at lowe water."

On the bluff point of St. Ann's Head, two miles south of Dale village, are two lighthouses.

Brunt Farm, on the coast, just within the corner of Mill Bay, preserves the tradition that there, where a steep path descends to the foot of Brunt cliff, Henry VII. landed, as Earl of Richmond, not knowing what fate had in store for him. Finding the climb up the craggy cliff a heavy one, "this," said he, "is brunt!" At the top of the cliff stood a wise-woman of Dale, who, after a glance at him, vowed that fortune and a kingdom would be his.

From West Dale Bay, by Marloes Bay, crossing thence the Woolpack mile-wide peninsula, and so to Marloes, offers a coast adventure worth the trouble. Quarters may be had at Marloes, if one is not too exacting. The cliffs above Marloes sands are such as to call out the new stone-men's raptures; and the beach is noted for its fine cowrie-shells. The men of Marloes used to be nicknamed "Marloes gulls"; and they appear to have used this character of theirs as a cloak for sharper qualities; for they were, in the old time, the most notorious wreckers on this coast.

From Marloes, or to be exact, from Martin's Haven, it is a short but sometimes very nasty crossing to Skomar Island. The following notes of a naturalist (the writer's uncle, Mr. Percy Percival, of Berrow Manor) well describe the wild colony of birds there:—

"A vast number of sea-birds breed on Skomar Island, the most peculiar of them all being the Manx Shearwater. These queer creatures confine themselves to the rabbit-holes during the day, and only come out in the dark, when they fly about close overhead, making a noise about which there is something truly uncanny. The young are reared in those holes, and they seem to be full of oil which is most offensive. I had one in my pocket and unfortunately went to sleep and crushed the poor downy little thing; as a consequence the coat was months before it was reasonably free from the oily smell.

"The Stormy Petrels nest and bring up their young in the stone walls which take the place of hedges on the Island. It amused me to see the boys looking, or rather smelling, for eggs, for as a matter of fact they find them by scent—walking along close to the wall, sniffing at the holes—then stopping and going back a few paces, twisting their heads about to get the scent like an old hound—finally they locate the hole, and pulling out a few stones soon get out the eggs, which are white and have a strong unpleasant scent, which they retain for a long time after being placed in the egg cabinet.

"The common Guillemots are in thousands, while the ringed variety are often met with. How these birds hatch their eggs and raise their young on a narrow shelf of rock, scarcely wide enough for foothold, is a mystery; luckily they are of a friendly disposition, for the least quarrelling between the birds would send the eggs into the sea, hundreds of feet below, so close are the eggs together; no doubt the peculiar shape of the eggs, *i.e.*, very narrow at one end and broad at the other, prevents them rolling off the shelf.

"Puffins, too, are very numerous, and look like long rows of white-breasted, black-backed soldiers, as they range them-

selves, quaint and motionless, along the edges of the cliff. They breed in rabbits' holes, or scoop out holes for themselves if the soil is soft; when bringing in food for their young, small sprats or other like fish, they arrange the fish so that the heads are in the bird's mouth and the bodies and tails hang out on either side, and look as if they had a brilliant silver beard; when bringing in food they usually stand for a short time beside their holes, then walk quaintly in to give the meal. These birds are only too easily caught in the breeding season, and many of them, sad to relate, are used for bait in the lobster-pots. The Oyster-Catcher, or Sea-Pie, breeds on the Island, and at least one pair of Peregrine Falcons manages to raise a nest of young, though the egg-collector too often manages to find them. Rabbits are the most certain market-product of the Island. Stoats and weasels are not seen, though they with the polecat are met with on the nearest mainland.

"Getting to the Island is best managed from Martin's Haven. It should only be attempted with experienced boatmen, as Jack's Sound, with its swift current, runs 'twixt the Island and Pembrokeshire—a pretty dangerous obstacle to negotiate.

"There is a mouse, I may add, peculiar to Skomar, differing in some slight manner from the ordinary English mouse."

CHAPTER XXIX

SOLVA—ST. DAVID'S—CITY AND CATHEDRAL—NON AND HER CHAPEL—THE HEAD AND CARN LLIDI —THE STORY OF BOIA

THE old approach to St. David's was always viâ Haverfordwest, whence you had the proverbial heart-breaking road to traverse—"sixteen miles and seventeen hills." Still there were alleviations by the way. There was Roche Castle, six miles out from "Harfat," as the country people call what was once their chief country town. This Castle since I last passed that road has been put in repair. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer was its tenant with his family for a brief holiday one autumn, when he asked the present vagrom Chronicler of the Principality, who was fast-tied in town, to visit him there—one of those lost opportunities that never return. Roche Castle, I have little doubt, will be the scene in days to come of a new George-and-Dragon myth, of which Welsh folk-lore is rather in need as the case stands. The Castle was built in the second rally of the Normans in South Wales by Adam de Rupe.

Half a league further on, and you drop down upon the shore by a steep descent at Newgale Bridge. This is the boundary between Little-

Photo by] [*Mr. Walter Spurrell, F.P., Carmarthen.*

SOLVA.

England-beyond-Wales and theLittle-Wales beyond that again. On one side of the bridge the Anglo-Flemish stock prevails, and English is spoken; on the other, the country is Welsh in speech and thought. The inn at Newgale Bridge has always seemed to me one of those places ordained for romance in the Stevensonian sense. It may be compared by the Sentimental Traveller with that at Leith Ferry or, if he have ever been to Seaton Sluice on the Northumberland coast, with the "Blue Anchor" there. "Once," writes that same Traveller, "returning from Solva, I intended to take the mail-gig back from Newgale Bridge, after exploring the stretch of coast where St. Elvis and Pointz Castle stand. On the way a tempting sandy cove at the foot of a green cwm led me to descend, and idly loitering there I noticed presently that the tide was advancing and cutting off the next rocky corner at a wild Pembrokeshire pace. Thereupon I turned back to the other horn of the bay, but before I could reach it the waves were breaking over the ridges. The only way of escape left was up the cliff, which did not look too formidable. Unluckily at a third of the way up a patch of loose shaly stone made the foothold worse than undependable. A few feet higher, were it not for the thick oak stick I carried and used now at need, driving it two feet into the crumbing shale, I should have come off. At this moment the waves were dashing with great spirit five fathoms below, so that the climber, looking down, saw them dash up and recoil and come on again, like wild beasts in pursuit. That was their moment—their chance to shake a mortal's faith in the cliff and in himself and his oak-peg. I am afraid the mortal

part of him felt queer; but there is at times a small providence in a precipice. A herb grew in a niche of loose stone, right under his very nose, as he hung there between sea and sky, and it had a faint, sweet, aromatic smell like a well-kept crab-apple. It was wonderful how that herb revived his courage. . . .

"Half an hour, then, of grim, determined oak-pegging and footstep-holing, and the top of the cliff was reached; and the climber threw himself breathless on the nearest green slope. When at last he rose up, and went to a knoll near by, whence he could look down to Newgale Bridge, it was to see the mail-gig already leaving the inn for the opposite ascent. There was nothing for it but to tramp the ten or eleven miles on to Ha'r-ford. The only serious wound sustained in the battle with the cliff was an unexplainable huge rent in the back of his coat, which made decent folk regard him suspiciously in the gaslit street of Ha'rford when he got there after dark."

From Newgale Bridge to Solva it is about five miles, or perhaps rather less. The long creek or harbour there makes an effect at once wild and homely as you descend into the place.

Nothing like Solva, says G. R., is to be seen elsewhere. Like a snow-white village maiden she perches on her cliffs. The Evil One must get little to do in Solva; the very chimneys, his favourite way of descent, are barred to him: are not they and the houseroofs painted as white as snow? Even the gate-posts, ay, and the gate-posts to the fields, are washed with white, that nothing evil may go out or in. On a clear blue day I have seen Solva dazzle in the sun's face, as she cast back the moving blue lights of the sea below. For the sea is unthinkably blue

at Solva on a clear day. The slate cliffs are blue and purple and green, the water clean and deep, like a fluid, many-coloured jewel; the air has something of a like quality, so clear and clean it is and full of aromatic fragrances. A leaf follows from an old traveller's MS. book, whose exact age it would be hard to decide:—

"Delighted with this strange wild place, we decided to pass the night here rather than at St. David's. We found excellent entertainment, and in the morning one of us went visiting among the village folk of Upper and Lower Solva. She told us afterwards she found a strange commingling of types there—what wonder? The harbour of Solva saw the Romans pass; and by the sea-way came rovers, Danish, and Irish; ay, many ships of many lands. I am assured too that the saintly community that ruled on this promontory left its spiritual progeny behind, notably in the person of one woman in whose history our companion became much interested. She was a tall, pale, gentle person, childless and somewhat sad. Her husband's trade (that necessary one that sacrifices our good friends the animals to our absurd needs) was her cross. He himself was an excellent kind man; she spoke of him with affection; but of his trade with shuddering; and yet she helped him in it. Her house was clean and plain, kept like a nun's cell, only better scrubbed. She had something of the temper of a Buddhist philosopher and talked of God, of the few books she possessed and treasured; of music, which she might scarcely ever hear; looking the while with a sort of patient wonder at the land-road and the sea-road that led to the great world; for out of Solva she might never come. In bearing, manner and mind this woman would have made a perfect Abbess of a convent: still she had her uses in Solva, if only to teach that one may get to the last peak of the world and find a saint established there.

Three and a half miles of unexciting road lead on to St. David's. The sea-coast and its splendid cliffs are out of sight; the landscape is barren. But in

its very austerity there hides a satisfaction, and in these days when quiet shrines are few the remoteness lends a charm.

The traveller who goes to St. David's with memories of Durham and Lincoln, and of towers set high, may be disappointed on arriving there in the quiet street to see no sign of a Cathedral. To find it, it is necessary to dive into the quiet little vale of Alun, where the Cathedral stands. There it was built, hidden, like many other Welsh churches and religious houses, from the world because of the fierce eyes of sea-rovers and "pyrats."

The more usual approach to the Cathedral is a hundred yards further on, by the lane known as the "Popples," a cobble-paved way which runs down to the Tower gateway, beyond which a broad range of steps and again a leisurely slant pathway leads to the door.

The steps descending into the Cathedral yard are called by the St. David's folk who tread them oftenest the "Thirty-nine Articles"—being of that orthodox number.

The first effect of the Cathedral, as one draws near to it, is apt to be for various reasons disappointing. The softness of age and the charm of old masonry are wanting, of course, to Sir Gilbert Scott's machine-cut blue facing blocks, which do not harmonise with the ancient parts of the building and its hand-chiselled, time-worn stone. One must pass round and on beyond the western doors of the Cathedral, and look across the little Alun stream, to the ruins of the Bishop's Palace, and along the north side of the Cathedral, past the ruined cloisters, and up the Vale of Roses, where the trees of the old Treasury Garden suggest a green pleasaunce for quiet walks, before one falls

under the spell of the place. Within, the church vista seen from the west end has massive and noble lines; and the time-faded colours of the pillars and the ceiling of Irish oak, and the form of the whole, make a lovely and harmonious interior.

The nave and north and south aisles have just enough of ornament; and the gradual rise in the floor up to the steps approaching to the choir takes the eye like the rise to a beech-grove from a forest lawn. At the top of the central steps, nearly on a line with the fifth pair of pillars, we have two tombs of clerics—probably Bishop Carew(1256–1280) and Bishop Beck (1280–1293), and between them the grave of some person unknown. Bishop Carew built a shrine for the relics of St. David, which may be that in the Presbytery. Bishop Beck had a mint at St. David's, and coined pennies, so rare now that a pretty penny would be asked for one of them. Also, he founded colleges at Llangadock and Llanddewi Brefi, and a hospital at Llawhaden. A penny of Edward I., a bishop's gold ring, a chalice, a paten, and a bishop's staff were found in his grave—if, indeed, it be his. We have already passed the much mutilated tomb of Bishop Morgan (1496–1504), just below the pillar nearest to the "Carew" tomb. The panel at the upper end represents the Resurrection, with soldiery, the work of no common sculptor. A step or two to the right from Carew's tomb, and we come to the tomb of Bishop Gower—bishop here for twenty years (1328–1347), the finest ecclesiastical builder Wales ever had. His grave is placed within reach of the rood screen, which he built; and in his day an altar stood before the screen, to serve the nave and the public worshippers there. The monks had their separate service at the altar. And now,

having reached the choir, we can afford a pause to examine the stalls and seat carvings, which date from the fifteenth century. They are boldly and joyously irreverent in character, and make open fun, it must seem, of the churchmen who were to occupy them. One shows us a fox in a monk's hood handing a wafer to a goose with the head of a lay penitent. Another is a boatload of men rowing St. Govan, who is evidently troubled by sea-sickness. All these carvings are excellent and highly secular. It is impossible to avoid admiring the fine discrimination that adorned the part of the Cathedral intended for the laity with pious works of art, and lightened the strain of an incessant piety for the poor monks by such cynic-comic devices.

Nowhere can the charm of St. David's be felt so fully as among the ruins of the Bishop's Palace, the work of that great architect, Bishop Gower. The old walls stand up, shaggy with ivy; the open arcading at the top runs its fine design boldly along the sky. Its noble proportions speak to the mind and recall an ample past. It is interesting to remember that one bishop built the palace and another bishop tried to pull it down.

Many royal princes have joined the stream that has flowed to St. David's, whose shrine, by its remoteness, the mystery of its sea-coast, and the difficulties of the journey in a day when wheels did not exist, gained all the enchantment that distance could lend. William the Conqueror, Henry II., Edward II., and Queen Eleanor are among the famous travellers who journeyed here. According to the old poets and chroniclers two visits to St. David's counted as one to Rome.

Photo by] [*Mr. Walter Spurrell, F.P., Carmarthen.*

PORTH CLEIS.

"Roma semel quantum."
Dat bis Menevia tantum."

No place suffered more from the iconoclasts than St. David's. The first great criminal was William Barlow, who sat as bishop from 1536 to 1547. He must have been a good man of business, for, in that space of time, he contrived to pull the lead roofing off the Bishop's Palace, which he sold for his own profit—more remarkable still, he contrived to marry his five daughters to five bishops!

His successor, Bishop Ferrer, the unluckiest bishop that could be imagined, was not altogether guiltless of spoliation either; but that he was imprisoned from political motives can be easily gathered from reading the charges against him, which include "wearing a hat, christening his child Samuel, whistling to the said child, whistling to a seal in Milford Haven, and riding with a bridle with white studs and snaffle, white Scottish stirrups, white spurs, a Scottish pad, with a little staff three quarters long." Ferrer, after being set free from prison, was imprisoned again and finally burnt in Carmarthen in 1555.

And what shall be said of the persecutors of poor Elis ap Howel, the antiquarian sexton?

"Because he being Sextene in the Cath' church of St. David's, of long time did conceal certain ungodly popish books; as masse books, hympnalls, grailes, Antiphon's, and suche like, (as it were loking for a day) Mr. Chantor deprived hym of the sextenship and the fees belonging thereunto, and caused the said ungodly books to be canceld and torne in pieces in the vestrie before his face." These "ungodly books" were

probably most beautiful and valuable specimens of the art of the time in illumination and gilding.

For St. David's sake, the first adventure outside the city's boundaries ought to be to Non's Well and Chapel, and the coast near by. This is within an easy walk of the cross. A stretch of road and a couple of field-side paths bring one into the seaward field where stands the chapel, which is little more than a rude pile of stones within the four walls of the little building. The well lies fifty yards to the left, in an enclosed space, over whose wall one must make shift to climb carefully, so as not to do any damage. The well-water is clear and sweet, and the present pilgrim can honestly vouch that he felt invigorated and reanimated after drinking it. It was—indeed, still is—in much repute as a pin-well and wish-well. A penny deposited there, in the little niche in the stone at the left side, is said to disappear mysteriously: proof enough, if one were needed, that there is something of enchantment about the spot.

The story of St. Non breathes an old-world air, to which the rude remains of the chapel and the lonely well lend a grey reality. Sandde, a chief of Cardigan, was bold and Non was beautiful, and he dispensed with the rites of the Church and the bride's consent; and so, as a result of a marriage by capture, in a barbaric age and a wild place—it is said during a storm and on the cliff below the chapel—the babe, David, was born in the year 558. One imagines that he was sheltered then in a hut where the chapel now stands. Certainly both he and his mother must have often drunk from the well.

But it was not there he was baptized, but at the old St. David's Well above the Cathedral.

On leaving the chapel field, you cross a style and gain an overhanging cliff-path that follows the windings of the cliffs. On the rocks below the incoming tide returns upon itself in magnificent ocean waves rolled on a great axis. The nearest creek below the chapel has a rocky outpost, called the Chanter's Seat, where you sit at peril. Beyond this comes Porth y Ffynnon, and then again Porth Clais, where the Alun has its aber or outflow. Limekilns and an old landing-place lend the primitive port a show of occupation. From the crossing of the head of Porth Clais, it cost us a good half-hour's ramble round the cliff to Porth Lisky; but these adventures can be continued endlessly here, with many ups and downs. A fair view of the Isle of Ramsey is to be gained from above Porth Taflod. It is usual to make the crossing to the island from Porth Clais.

The noblest fastness of all this peninsula is St. David's Head, which is a little over two miles from the Cathedral. The by-road that crosses the Alun and runs up the bank above the Bishop's Palace is the most direct. But the main road up the Vale may be taken to the next bold turn to the left, and so to the ugly Vicarage posted high above the bridge, which carries one round by Pen Arthur Farm to join the wilder roadway beyond. The latter bears the curious name of "Fordd Chwech-Erw," or the Road of the Six Acres. The road reaches the shore at the northern end of Whitesand Bay, close to the old site of St. Patrick's Chapel, which is some twenty paces above the road. On the other side of the road, where a ruined boathouse shows some old walls, began the ancient enclosure of Menapia—

the oldest settlement—obviously too near the sea and too tempting to sea-pirates to remain long in that situation. The Vale of Alun, the historical or legendary "Vale of Roses," would easily recommend itself at such time, as the first site proved disastrous.

We have to ascend a considerable bank now on the way to the Head, skirting two more creeks or porths—Porth Llenog and Porth Melgaw. All along this open sea rampart we are on ground that once and in the unpopulous days of the cavemen and the cliff-men was one of the most populous parts of early prehistoric Britain. How did they live? one asks as one gazes on the unfertile promontory. Not on plants and herbs, but on fish and the wild creatures to be caught in the sea and on its confines.

Mr. Edward Laws, author of *Little England Beyond Wales*, and the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, author of *Pabo the Priest*, &c., made considerable excavations on and a little north of the Head, which proved clearly that an extensive range of earth cells and dwellings existed here.

Even on calm days the Atlantic pressure on the rocks here is formidable. In a storm from the south-west the breakers are terrible and magnificent. One breaker, on a fine August afternoon in 1901, was the cause of the sad death of Reginald Smith (son of Chancellor Smith, the Rector of Swansea), who, stepping aside to avoid the spray, fell into Porth Melgaw, and after swimming vainly up the creek again and again, only to be washed back by the recoiling waves, was carried under. A stone now marks the spot where he slipped.

From the "Head" it is well worth while to climb

Carn Llidi, 595 feet above the sea-level. It suggests that a race of giants preceded the pigmies, or hut-dwellers, below, and hurled these mighty masses into "something like a cairn!"

From the top one can look down on Clegyr Foia, that hill whose name calls to mind the kind of life men led here fourteen hundred years ago. Clegyr Foia means Crag Boia; and Boia was an Irish plunderer and chieftain of the sixth century who sojourned there. His story, as told by Mr. Baring-Gould, recalls the old fierce ballads of the North with the cruel step-mother as protagonist.

Boia had fixed his camp on the rock that bears his name, 320 feet long by 100 broad as you step it out to-day, and with him were his terrible wife and his step-daughter, the little maiden Dunawd. One morning he climbs to the top of his rock and looks below; the smoke of a strange fire is going up from the slope of Carn Llidi, and he hurries off at once to discover not a rival robber, but a hermit cooking his meal beside his fire—David himself. Boia found him a wise and peaceful soul who discoursed on the new doctrines; Boia's heart was softened and he allowed the hermit to remain. Not so Boia's fierce wife: St. David could make no impression on her pagan spirit, and she resorted to every possible method to drive him away. Finding all fail, she determined to invoke the aid of her gods, and to propitiate them by offering a human sacrifice.

One warm day in early autumn she asked her step-daughter Dunawd to come with her into the hazel-wood to gather nuts, and then said she would dress Dunawd's tangled curls. But when the little maid laid down her head in her lap

she first shore off her locks (an act by which she adopted the child as her own), and then cut her throat. Where the blood of Dunawd fell a pure spring burst up from the ground, which is called Ffynnon Dunawd (Dunawd's Fountain) to this day.

But the vengeance of Heaven was waking against the camp of Boia and its inhabitants. We can imagine the dark headland sleeping under the September moon, and judgment in the shape of the "shiplette" of Paucant, the son of Liski, slipping with the tide into the bay below. (If you disbelieve the story you can go to-morrow to Porth Liski (Liski's harbour) and see where he landed and climb all the way he went to Boia's Crag.) This son of Liski was an Irish rover, too, and his men behind him carried slings and stones in their hands as David did in Palestine one still remoter day. One can imagine the shout with which they sprang on the fifteen-feet wall that surrounded the camp; the hail of sling-stones swept over the west wall and fell on the further side—where you may pick up one or two still. Boia and his men were massacred, one and all.

The wretched wife of Boia was slain or lost the same night, and the crag knew them no more.

But David flourished and his doctrines spread, and he built a monastery and dwelt on that wild promontory till the time came for him too to depart. The words of the chronicler describing his death are much too moving not to be repeated in full:—

"And on Tuesday night, about the time of cockcrowing, lo a host of angels filled the city, it was full of all kinds of songs and mirth; and when the morning came the sun was shining on

all the hosts. And on that Tuesday, the first of March, the Lord Jesus took the soul of St. David, with great victory and joy, and honour; after hunger, and thirst, and cold, and labour, and fasting, and granting charitable relief, and affliction, and trouble, and temptations, and anxiety. The angels took his soul to the place where there is light without end, and rest without labour, and joy without sorrow, and plenty of all good things, and victory, and brightness and beauty. The place where there is health without pain, and youth without old age, and peace without disagreement, and music without affliction, and rewards without end."

The snow-white farmhouse of Clegyr Foia nestles under the rock at the south-east side. Architecturally it is most interesting, as it gives an example of the famous round chimney which is peculiar to Celtic Pembrokeshire and which is rapidly vanishing away. The house has a stone porch with slabbed seats on either side; the chimney rises between the porch and the pent-house roofed recess on the other side.

CHAPTER XXX

RAMSEY ISLAND — GRASSHOLM AND THE GANNET COMMUNITY—THE ISLAND OF BIRDS—GWALES IN PENVRO—THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS — AN UNRECORDED VICTORY OF THE BRITISH NAVY

Ramsey Island lies next door to St. David's, but the crossing is not to be made every day, and it is often hard to get boats and boatmen, and you may have to wait indefinitely if it be late autumn. The crossing is usually made from Porth Clais, and the excursion takes at least four to five hours, while a quarter of an hour's extra delay on the island itself may cause the losing of the tide for the return journey. A couple of hours on the island permits the climbing of Carn Llundain and the visiting of Twyn Llundain (why these two landmarks should be associated with London is not clear: perhaps because they are so remote from everything that is London's and London like).

The only house on the island is near the landing-place, and half an hour's climb will carry you thence to the highest Carn, four hundred and forty-six feet. The top commands every point of interest—on the seaward side the Bishop and his Clerks, and the lighthouse on the South Bishop—and on the next horn, southward of St. Bride's Bay, Musslewick and Skomar Island and the

lighthouses at the mouth of Milford Haven. At spring-tides an ample reach of the Haven itself is visible just south of St. Bride's Hill across the Marloes cliffs. The view of St. David's is so elusive that a painter christened it "Hide and Seek Town." We should remember, as we look upon the formidable rocks christened the "Bishop and his Clerks" and watch the water racing northward past them, the old epigram which George Owen of Henllys fondly iterates in his *Description of Pembrokeshire.* We had better give part of the passage in which it occurs:—

"Ramsey rangeth in order the Bishop and his Clearkes, being VII en in Nomber, all wayes seene at lowe water who are not without some small Quiristers, who shewe not themselves, but at spring tydes and calm seas. The chiefest of theis ys called of the inhabitantes the Bishop rocke; one other, *Carreg u Rossan;* the third *Divighe,* the fourth *Emskir;* the rest as yet I have not learned their names. . . . *The Bishop and those his Clerkes preach deadly doctrine to their winter audience, and are commendable for nothinge but for their good residence.*"

In another MS. said to be Owen's two more names of the Clerks are given: to wit, *Gwen Carreg* and *Carreg Hawloe.* George Owen tells us too that these rocks "are accompted a great danger to those that seek Milford coming from the southwest seas."

When arranging the boat excursion for Ramsey, it is well to allow time for coasting the west cliffs, Ynys Bery and the whole circuit of the island. This should only be attempted under the care of a couple of boatmen. The tide in Ramsey Sound runs like a millrace, and needs much humouring with certain winds and uncertain currents. If you are yachting, you can sail on from Ramsey

to Grassholm—the Island of Birds, the farthest west of the Welsh isles, and the actual spot called Gwales in the story of the sons of Llyr.* It is a spot where few people have set foot. Fortunately a Welsh artist, a bird-lover and a great traveller, Mr. T. H. Thomas, paid the island a visit and camped there with some friends one Whitsuntide, and he has very generously put his notes at my disposal.

"It was nightfall," says Mr. Thomas, "when with our multifarious belongings we scrambled up the rocks above the tiny landing-place on the island. We stumbled along among stones and puffin-burrows to a spot which one of the sailors had told us was the only camping-ground. We passed a painful hour of struggle in the darkness with our tent, but at last it was pitched well and truly and we, wrapped like mummies upon the ground, courted slumber. The island 'was full of noises': cries of birds strange to us, the beat of countless wings, the dash of billows, and a curious soughing noise beneath us, afterwards discovered to be the swirl of meeting waters in a cavern piercing the isle beneath the spot where we reposed. The cries of some of the sea-birds were sadness itself, and listening to them in the darkness the lament for Myrto by André Chénier came to mind:—

> "'Pleurez, doux alcyons: ô vous, oiseaux sacrés,
> Oiseaux chers a Thétis, doux alcyons, pleurez!
> Elle a vecu, Myrto!'

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* "And there they found a fair and regal spot overlooking the ocean, and a spacious hall therein. And they went into the hall, and two of its doors were open, but the third was closed, that which looked toward Cornwall" (*The Mabinogion*: "Branwen, daughter of Llyr").

OFF RAMSEY ISLAND.

From a drawing by Mr. T. H. Thomas, Cardiff.

"The morning light peering yellow through our canvas roof aroused us, and emerging from our tent we found ourselves in a realm of strange beauty. We were encamped upon a spot covered with vivid vegetation in a tiny ravine; on either side were steep rocks of brightest orange colour, being covered with brilliant lichen. At either end the ravine was 'crowned by summer sea.' Every point, ledge, and cleft of the rocks around us was occupied by sea-birds, gulls, puffins, razorbills, guillemots which rose at our apparition, with wild cries circled around, and then settled again to watch the intruders. During the night there had been inexplicable croakings in our tent; these were now explained by the appearance of some puffins hopping in a bewildered manner from the tent, which was pitched over their burrows.

"Breakfast was the next thing, and while preparing we may think over the history of the isle. Very little can be gathered from maps and books; Grassholm is an almost unconsidered islet. Owing to its westerly position few maps of Wales include it. It has always in historic periods been uninhabited, but our after observations led us to think there had been a prehistoric occupation. The only early map in which it appears is Kip's, which accompanies the 1637 edition of Camden's *Britannia*. There an island occupies the position of Grassholm, but is called Wallys (? Whales) Island. There is notice in Drayton's *Polyolbion* (1613), where 'Gresholme' appears in the illustration and lines occur in the poem:—

"'As *Rat* and *Sheepy* set to keep salme Milford's mouth
Exposed to Neptune's power—so Gresholme farre doth stand."

"Although not directly describing Grassholm, there are passages referring to the ornithology of the West Coast and Island of Pembrokeshire in Camden which are worth transcription both for their quaintness and instructiveness. Speaking of Ramsey Island (in the *Additions*) the following account is given from a letter by the 'Revd. Mr. Nicholas Roberts, A.M., Rector of Lhan Dhewi Velpey,' of migratory sea-birds :—

"'To this Island and some rocks adjoining . . . the Bishop and his Clerks, do yearly resort, about the beginning of April such a number of birds of several sorts, that none but such as have been eyewitnesses can be prevailed upon to believe it; all which after breeding here, leave us before August. They come and also leave constantly in the night-time, for in the evening the rocks shall be covered with them, and next morning not a bird to be seen, so in the evening not a bird shall appear, and the next morning the rocks be full. They also visit us commonly about Christmas, and stay a week or more, and then take their leave till breeding-time. Three sorts of these migratory birds are called in Welsh Mora, Poethwy, and Pâl; in English Eligug, Razorbill, and Puffin; to which we may also add the Harry-bird.' Another interesting reference is made to the Peregrine Falcon, fine specimens of which are still to be observed in the district. 'A noble kinde of Falcons have their airies here and breed in the rocks, which King Henry the Second, as *Giraldus* writeth, was wont to preferre before all others of that kind are those the skilful Faulconers cell *Peregrines:* for they have

"'Depressus capitis vertex oblongaque toto
Corpore pennarum series pallentia crura
Et graciles digiti ac sparsi, naresque rotundæ.

"'Head flat and low, the plume in rewes along
The body laid : legges pale and worn are found
With slender clawes and talons there among
And those wide-spread : the bill is hooked around.'

"Breakfast over, we mounted the island to the west and soon found ourselves on the summit, where we were in face of a spectacle which none of us can ever forget. We were in a metropolis of birds; thousands of white wings and breasts were before us, on the grey or orange rocks, all ringed about with the azure white-flecked sea and sky; our ears were filled with a wild concert. Every rocky ledge and terrace had its rows of puffins, and among them guillemots and razor-bills, the latter often with their eggs beside them; clinging under the ledges above the sea were the pearly kittiwakes, and here and there among the rocks a herring-gull could be seen sitting, and on a few points the black-headed gulls were perched regarding the scene with a view to the discovery of good fishing-grounds. High in the air a peregrine falcon soared. But on the western slope of the island, facing the great ocean, were the settlements of the gannets. Two of the highest rocks had been selected by them, and nests had been built upon every step of rock. Counting the two villages, more than two hundred solan geese were in view, each bird in beautiful snow-white plumage sitting on its dark-coloured nest of seaweed. With the morning sun lighting them up, and seen against the grey and orange rocks, they formed a beautiful sight which we longed to view more closely.

"Not less amazing than the sight was the strange hubbub to the ear. Continually were heard the warning cry of each species, the subterranean

'Oh!' of the puffins, and the fluster with which they dashed out of their burrows and sped, blundering against obstacles, down the slopes till they found a little vantage-point for flight. The razor-bills said 'Grr' to us, with disfavour, and the kittiwakes under the ledges, absorbed in eternal love-making, said 'ittywa-a-ke' and 'a-a-oh-a,' or chirped; the 'oyster-catchers' whistled as they sped along; the herring-gull's gravely sonorous 'Ah-ha-a!' sounded like a staccato warning against our proceeding further; and the peregrine falcon, circling high in the air, continually kept up its piercing shriek of 'Ka-ka-ka-ka,' unwittingly telling us that her young were near. Under all this charivari there was the deep bourdon note of the sea as it boomed among the caverns below.

"The island may be described as roughly a five-sided pyramid of perhaps four hundred feet high upon a base half a mile long east to west and a quarter broad; each side is deeply grooved and filled with peaty soil. The island is walled with precipices of a hundred feet more or less.

"Making our way to the gannet settlements, we had to cross the bare peat in which the puffins burrowed; the patting of their feet had worn it bare of vegetation and the utmost care was requisite to prevent our breaking in unexpectedly upon their nests, so completely was the soil tunnelled with the burrows in which they deposit their single dirty white egg. While some attended to their domestic duties, others sunned themselves in little mobs on the rocks, while at times a whole troop would take wing and, circling round the island, return to the spot they had left, or would alight on the sea and fish in long-extended curves. On land or on the wing the puffin is equally comic,

his upright position, his dark back and white breast, his hooked red beak, and his little vermilion legs, or when flying his short wings and red webs sticking out like a red tail and looking like a big flying beetle, make him a perpetual diversion to the beholder.

"The settlement of the gannets, otherwise called solan-geese, is upon the western end of the island, at a point where the rocks rise most perpendicularly from the sea. This bird can only be seen breeding in two localities upon the English and Welsh shores, Lundy and Grassholm. The bird has great beauty; the plumage is snowy white, except for a delicately shaded orange-yellow at the top of the head and back of the neck, and the pinion feathers, which are jet black; the body is about the size of a domestic goose; the beak, which is large and strong, is of a pale blue tint, and a somewhat similar hue lines the feet. The wings are of exceptional length and strength, being usually six feet from tip to tip—they are narrow, similar in shape to those of the albatross, to which the bird is probably little inferior in powers of flight.

"As we came near the eyries many of the birds, one after another, with many preliminary complaints, rose from their nests, and advancing to the cliff edge, spread their splendid wings, then with magnificent action launched themselves into the air and flew to sea with astonishing speed and ease. We afterwards had opportunities for seeing these birds swoop upon the fish. Flying at a considerable distance above the water, they would suddenly descend with a swiftness and force far surpassing that of a hawk, which they can do in safety over the yielding element.

"At this first visit only did the birds rise at our approach. We carefully avoided quick gestures and cries, and they soon became accustomed to our presence, and, the gannets especially, would allow of our very near approach: there was something particularly pleasant in this kind of anserine fraternisation.

"The nest of the gannet is a small mound of seaweed placed upon the bare rock in the most exposed situations; the half-decayed seaweed adheres closely to the rock, and a few sticks may be roughly placed upon the seaweed. Upon the nest lies the single egg which the bird lays, at first a kind of greenish white with a scurfy surface, about the size of a large hen's egg but narrower in shape. During the period of incubation, being rolled over and over upon the dirty seaweed, it becomes a dark brown. In addition to the decaying weed the presence of an ejected fish or two makes the nest not a savoury object. The gannet is one of the Pelicanidæ, and retains in a pouch small fish, which it disgorges at the nest before again going fishing. We sat near them and watched their ways; they sat stolidly, nearly all of them with their heads to the wind, and they seem careless sitters, as in some cases the eggs might be seen beside them. If one rose from her nest, the others made a discontented outcry and pecked at her as she waddled to the cliff's edge and were not above dragging bits out of her nest for their own use, and stealing her fish in her absence. Here and there among them a guillemot might be seen, beside it its beautiful turquoise egg deposited upon the bare rock.

"In the side of the rock below the gannets was a kind of arched alcove, which was occupied

SEABIRDS AT GRASSHOLM ISLAND.

by three pairs of kittiwakes, whose manners and customs quite represented those of the species generally at that particular time of the year. They were simply absorbed in love-making; the beautiful little pearly creatures seemed to have been schooled in every possible variety of flirtation, and under every ledge of rock overhanging the sea these flirtations appeared to be going on. Their ways must be seen to be believed—and, in fact, only Monsieur Daudet or Ohnet could possibly describe satisfactorily the events of these alcoves.

"The young of the falcons are hatched in a hollow under a rock, a simple depression in the ground forming the nest. Though so young that they could hardly stand, they seemed able to fight, and wrestled together and bit each other like young bears. They were covered with pure white down.

"The nest of the black-backed gull showed us quite a rising family. A flat, saucer-like nest of dried grasses was a great centre of life, and all the children were getting on nicely. The eldest was a spotted, fawn-coloured puff of down, the second was not yet dried and combed from the egg, while the youngest was chipping his way out of the egg with many chirps, the egg meanwhile rolling over and over as the struggles of the chick changed its centre of gravity.

"The whole of the island is a mass of intrusive rock, the eastern portion of a dark colour, a basalt or trap, becoming of a purplish tint upon the higher portions and at the western part, where it has to the eye the character of a porphyry. The stone is a dark purplish red lava of great hardness. At the eastern or landward end is a fault which exhibits a very curious character, which the action of the sea has accented. Great movement has

taken place, and a gash exists right across the islet. I could not determine whether this fissure has ever been filled with solid rock and then breached by chemical and sea action, but at present it is entirely arched over by a breccia of blocks of various rocks, most of them angular, but a few more or less rounded boulders, some of which are of great size. The southern end of this chasm is at the small beach where we landed, at which the conglomerate can be easily studied, then masked by a deep mass of peaty soil it crosses the island and assumes a highly picturesque aspect at its northern end, where a large oval boulder is supported right in the centre of the section of the conglomerate arch, forming a sort of architrave to a gloomy portal, below which at a depth of thirty feet or so the waves heave and stream into the resounding cavern corridor. This entrance is very weird-looking; the walls are high and dark, many nests of sea-birds are about it, the denizens flying in screaming squadrons to and fro, the waters heave and fall in a 'darkness visible,' and the cavern is resonant with the hissing of sea-spray and the gloomy mutterings of the billows as they meet with the waves from the other entry in the bowels of the earth.

"Outside the cavern a seal was seen disporting itself, which probably had its home in the cave. We were afterwards given to understand that seals breed there, and that a local person, whose position is such that he should know better, goes over occasionally to shoot them.

"A few rock specimens collected, Mr. Storrie described as diabasic rock containing epidote, and a softer purplish red rock was a consolidated volcanic ash now decomposing.

"The probability of the island containing traces of occupation in prehistoric ages has been suggested in consequence of our observation of distinct traces of erections or enclosures upon the higher parts of the island, upon examining which closely we collected flint chips, portions of sun-dried pottery, and other objects.

"We had ordered the cutter to return for us on Whit Monday, but we could not tear ourselves away from the island, so only Mr. West, who was tied by engagements, left, and the rest of us set to our occupations, I going to renew my acquaintance with the gannets. Among them I was, if not welcomed, at least permitted, and I began some sketching until I heard the fell 'crack' of a rifle break in upon our millennium. Then commenced a series of events upon which this is not the place to enlarge, except in so far as was reported to a Society, the name of which frequently came up in regard to the proceedings which followed:—

"'An attack was made upon the settlement of gannets by a company on board H.M.S. *Sir Richard Fletcher*, followed by a landing and general battue upon shore, terminating in the slaughter of many birds, several gannets, and the destruction of the whole of the eggs of the latter. We considered that the facts should be reported, which we did in a letter to the *Daily Graphic*. The press, local and general, emphasised our complaint, and questions were asked in the House by Mr. Webster, M.P. for St. Pancras, who had been informed by the Bath Selborne Society, and by Sir Hussey Vivian. The Government shielded the offenders, who were military and volunteer officers, so it was left to private enterprise to bring the matter home to them. The case was taken up by the Royal

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and, with great difficulty, for here again the local authorities were most reluctant to move, Mr. R. I. Colam, the able and energetic secretary, obtained, at Haverfordwest Sessions, a verdict against the marauders. The Society considered the case one of the most important they had fought, and spoke of it "as the most wanton violation of the law for the protection of birds" that had occurred since the enactment of the Statute. From that Society, from the Bath Branch of the Selborne Society, and from the central Selborne Society in London, we received votes of commendation for moving in the matter. Full details of the whole case may be found in the September number of the *Animal World*, 1890.'

"A large case containing a gannet, puffins, guillemots, &c., killed by the party from the steamer, is now set up in the Cardiff Museum with a background painted to represent the gannet settlement."

CHAPTER XXXI

THE NORTH PEMBROKE COAST — FISHGUARD AND GOODWICK—THE VICTORY OF JEMIMA—DINAS HEAD—SEALS AND WILD GOATS—NEWPORT—PRECELLY TOP

WORKING north along the Pembroke coast from St. David's, you have a stretch to explore which had been rather neglected by the later Welsh antiquaries, when that excellently reminiscent newspaper, the *Pembroke Guardian*, appeared on the scene under the lead of Mr. H. W. Williams, of Solva.

Two roads run parallel to the coast-line for some miles. The lower touches Llanrian and Trevine; the upper and better road so far as mere travelling goes, runs by Croesgoch to Mathry. In either case the traveller, if he be bent on antiquity, will wish he had taken the other. For this part of Dewisland is fairly studied with remains—cromlechs on the moors, cliff-castles by the sea—worth hunting for. Every village you pass has some old stone or other built in a wall or doorway to rouse your curiosity and make you wish secretly to unbuild and examine it. As for the cromlechs at Llanrian and at Mathry, they are known things; and Sir Norman Lockyer's theory that a cromlech was a cell of the living and not

merely of the dead lends them the interest of fresh discovery. In the same way, Mr. Edward Laws has helped to make his Pembroke neighbours aware of a new human interest in the cliff-castles, which were usually put down to the strategic convenience of the Black Pagans—the Wickings. But many of them were evidently not forts intended to be a base for sea-pirates' raids inland, but the abode of cliff-dwellers who lived on roots and shell-fish. A month spent in exploring the coast here, with a sketch-book to help the investigation, will go far to clear a way into the primitive life of the Welsh coast centuries before the Romans came.

Gerald the Welshman speaks of the country near St. David's as stony, barren, unimprovable territory, without any pleasant meadows, a place of wind and storm. A tourist of a hundred years ago adds that "the rocks on this shore are shaken into every possible shape of horror," and says he found not a glimpse of smiling nature to relieve his aching sight. As there are no hedges, he adds, even the sheep and the geese have to be tethered together. One may add that nowhere in Wales can one get such a sensation of sheer loneliness. Yet I seem to remember blue and white skies and radiant days, and a delicious short thymy sea-turf on some of the barest outliers of this coast, flanked too by a sea of such colour that it stained one's eyes with Italian blue for hours afterwards.

Fenton opened a tumulus near Castell Havod, which has been called both Danish and Roman, and is neither. At Trevaen—the Three Stones—are the remains of what were called Bishop Martin's Palace.

Photo by] *[Prof. J. Morgan Lewis, Aberystwyth.*

PENTRE IVAN CROMLECH.

You pass three more cromlechs before you come to your last mile at Goodwick. This promoted village now forms one side of the harbour and seaport, with Fishguard on the other, that stand on the world's highway and provide a new through-connection on the Great Western sea-route. The south-west corner of Fishguard Bay, well sheltered from the prevailing winds and the worst seas that affect this coast, offers good space for quays and a safe landing, and the Bay a good road for big ships to lie at anchor. The railway has already equipped a dock and built steamers, and converted a country-house into a hotel—the "Wyncliff"—which is everything that the ordinary railway hotel is not, ensconced as it is in a green corner of the cliff above the new harbour works, with a wild headland beyond and remains of cromlechs almost at its back-door. On reaching the terminus and alighting, you have the village rising on your left and stretching along the cliff, a mixture of brand-new houses and nice old cottages, while to the right you have the flat salt-marsh with the road to Fishguard running behind the gravel bank of the beach across it.

At the very high tides this half-mile or more of beach is reduced to a narrow strip or to nothing, and the sand is hardly of Tenby quality. The rocks on either side of Fishguard Bay are basaltic, and take at the neighbouring corner of "Penanglas" and elsewhere most curious shapes. Hence the queer name given them by the Fishguard children—"torthau ceiniogau"—*i.e.*, penny loaves.

The headland on which the village of Llanwnda stands high can be reached by the Llanwnda road, or by the slant path climbing the heathy slope

behind the Wyncliff Hotel. Llanwnda is the only parish in Wales or Great Britain that can claim to have been invaded by, and to have itself defeated, a French army. To be sure, it seems in the retrospect a comedy invasion; but it roused terror enough at the time. The place, says the *Cambrian Guide*, was for ages obscure, till Tuesday, the 20th of February, 1797, when three large vessels were discovered standing in from the channel, and nearing the rocky coast of *Llanwnda*. These were supposed to be becalmed merchantmen, coming to anchor in order to wait the return of the tide, or a brisker gale; but on their nearer approach, a most serious alarm was excited." After a pause indeed the English colours were struck, and the French tricolour was boldly displayed; and at nightfall "boats were seen putting off from their sides, full of men, followed by others fully manned, and in such rapid succession as to leave no doubt of their being an enemy. They disembarked at Aber-y-felin, rolling their casks of ammunition up a precipitous steep; a task so herculean as almost to exceed credibility. The night was dark, and in consequence the number of the enemy could not be ascertained; the inhabitants in the vicinity deserted their houses, and taking refuge among rocks and furze, waited within sight of their dwellings, expecting to see them ravaged and burnt. The townsmen of Fishguard caught the general panic, and rapidly removed their wives, children, and valuables. The first impulse of the invading crew was to satisfy hunger; the fields were occupied in the business of cookery, and the order of the night was plunder! Gluttony was succeeded by intoxication. A wreck of wine had occurred a few days

before, and every cottage was supplied with a cask."

At Trehowel Farm, the master of the house, believing the vessels to be English, prepared a great supper for their officers, and only escaped at the last moment. In all, thirty to forty farms and many cottages were raided, but the local historian says, "wonderfully little mischief and scarcely any violence was done." It was the more surprising as the invaders were mainly French convicts. "At a farm called Cotts, a poor woman recently confined had been abandoned by her cowardly husband. When the Frenchmen entered the house, in her despair she held up her baby in her arms"—and, respecting her condition, they soothed her fears and left her in peace. In all, two Welshmen (who had already attacked and killed one Frenchman) were killed; one young woman was shot and ill-treated, but survived, and a Solva sailor was wounded. Meanwhile, Lord Cawdor at Stackpole and Lord Milford were able, on receiving the alarm, to muster some seven hundred and fifty militiamen and yeomanry; and these, with the aid of Captain William Davies, who had seen some service, were disposed to look as formidable as possible. But the Fishguard version of the story of this gallant defence is the most gratifying: and in this it was the great Jemima in her *het befr* and her "red shawl" (shôl Jemima) who was both heroine and commander-in-chief of the victorious Welsh battalion that figured in the heights above Fishguard.

It was Wednesday when the invaders landed. On Thursday, at noon, when they were posted above the village of Llanwnda, the French frigates surprised both friends and foes ashore by setting

sail. That night an attack was planned by the allied forces, led by Lord Cawdor and the gallant Jemima; but luckily was not carried out. Then two French officers came over to Fishguard, under a flag of truce: a council of war at the "Royal Oak," Fishguard, followed; and a game of bluff, in which an English officer lied to admiration, multiplied the English forces in his account by ten, resulted in the preliminary compliments to the surrender of the French forces on the following day, which took place duly at Goodwick. Thence the whole force of prisoners was marched off to Haverfordwest Castle. The French soldiers, says Mr. Laws, were clad in old English uniforms, re-dyed a rusty brown, and still furnished with regimental buttons; with these they wore black belts and old cavalry helmets. So ended this comedy of war, which, however, was meant seriously enough.

Welsh shawls that will wear for ever are still made at Fishguard, which has had for long a reputation for homespun. The town enjoys the privileges of an old borough. It was built, you will observe, in two halves: known locally as the "town" and the "lower town." The latter, which is probably the older of the two, explains the Welsh name "Abergwaen," since it lies at the *aber* or outlet of the little Gwaen river, enclosed in a sheltering sea-cwm.

Approaching Fishguard from Goodwick Station, the road makes a sharp zigzag up the bank at the end of the marshy level—scene of the old battle-field where Trahearn ap Caradog defeated Rhys ab Owain—sometimes known as Goodwick Moor. The bank brings the bicyclist off his machine, and makes the average Fishguard horse

THE CASTLE, NEWPORT, PEMBROKESHIRE.

Photos by] [*Prof. J. Morgan Lewis, Aberystwyth.*

LLECH-Y-DRYBEDD CROMLECH.

To face p. 335.

drop his head and prepare for a pull. Avoiding the road which runs off to the right of the village, you are soon in the "Square." The town will not delay you if you are a tourist; but below its apparent ugly surface it is full of character. Besides its own particular creek and beach, Fishguard, too, has on the north a good stretch of coast—rock and grassy cliffs and miniature mountains—including Ceiliog Goch and Penrhyn Ychain, and the sea-commanding outposts of Carn Fran and Carn Gelli.

Nearly opposite a draper's shop in the main street, as you leave the square on the way to the lower town, you may see the memorial stone to the redoubtable Jemima, after whom the red shawl, known locally as "shôl Jemima," took its name. The monument may easily be deciphered through the railings, and the inscription shows plainly that it was the Amazon cohort in the "shôl goch," and not the magnificent lies of one English officer, or the parade of the Pembroke fencibles, who saved Great Britain from the enemy and the invader. Jemima was, I believe, like Meg Merrilies, "as tall as Amazon," and of great muscular strength. She was a cobbler by trade, and her craft should certainly enshrine her.

Above the "lower town," where Jemima lived and cobbled, the Gwaen flows past the remains of an old British town near the old quarry at Caerau. The road from the square in the town above which runs to Pontvaen, up the Gwaen valley, brings one to Caerau by a track across the meadows of Caerau Farm on the left; and on the other side of the river you have "Hen Fynwent"—an old burial-ground, as its name tells you.

North of Fishguard lies *Dinas Head* with its cliffs and vast cave, through which a boat may pass at half ebb, as wild a piece of architecture as sea ever carved. Llanllawer Court lies at the western end of the hill in the Gwaen valley, in a very covetable site. One of the fairest of riverside roads traverses this wooded vale on to Pontvaen and beyond. Emerging at length, the wayfarer crosses the moorish, treeless uplands of Carn Ingli Common and so reaches Newport. *Dinas Head* is locally called the "Island," the little Dinas' mill-brook serving to island it on the east. The sea is making vigorous inroads on the north side of the Head, at Cwm-yr-Eglwys, the green cwm where the ruined church and some dilapidated cottages bear testimony to its advance.

Some years ago, accompanied by the hereditary chieftain of this district who is also an incorrigible book-hunter, and the author of *Ffordd y Troseddwr* and other novels (now alas! a B.C.L. and M.P.), I and G. R. took boat at Cwm-yr-Eglwys beach, and explored the great cave. The boat, it may be said, was manned by a famous crew consisting entirely of retired sea-captains, some six or seven. They rowed us right into the mouth of the cavern, a great Gothic water-church, with mysterious and awful recesses. Two of us landed, if I rightly remember, on one ledge in the chancel, and on the way back we just saw a seal's head, like a big water-rat's, before he dived.

On the grassy cliffs of the island the last herd of wild goats in Wales still pastures; and as the boat carried us round the headland two of the nimble beasts could be seen browsing on the verge of the precipice. The whole island is held as one

farm, and by the same family (Raymond by name) that has held it for centuries.

Going north-east from Dinas Cross, you reach Newport about a league along the Cardigan road. Like the other Newport, the town has a past. A plague in the sixteenth century is but a thing of yesterday, as you realise on surveying its castle and asking how Parrog got its name. Across the river, which can be forded when the tide and flood-water permit, or crossed by the new bridge from Parrog Terrace, lies a second range of sands, the Berry sands, under Berry Hill (so called from the old demesne of Bury). A path runs along the cliffs toward Aberfforest; and there are no end of summer loitering-places on one beach or the other. Near the Berry bridge is a cromlech—one of the series that may yet make the North Pembroke coast famous in the history before history. Newport Castle, still used as a dwelling-house (sometime occupied by Mr. Brett, the sea-painter), has fine gateway towers; but the cromlechs were already old when it was built.

Still further up the hill, a hundred yards to the left of the same road, is the site of the Castle of Llanhyvor, the "Castrum de Llanhover" mentioned by Gerald, which was built by Martin de Tours; and afterwards, it is said, relinquished for the new castle he had built at Newport. Its grass-grown vestiges show it was probably deserted early in the Castle period.

But the Nevern "lion" of antiquity is the fine Pentre Evan cromlech, about half an hour's walk from the church, across the river and beyond the Cardigan high-road. Within the last four or five years it has for protective purposes been sur-

rounded by a wire fence. It stands on the moor above the old house of Pentre Evan, now a farm but once a mansion of some state. It is as well to ask for directions at the Penaf Wern-ddu Farm, beyond Pentre half a mile, as the cromlech is difficult to find. The capstone of this cromlech is nearly seventeen feet long, nearly nine feet broad, and three deep; it stands nearly nine feet from the ground. The capstone weighs from ten to twelve tons.

Straight from the cromlech from Nevern you ought to find your way to Castell Mawr, 2¼ miles east of it: a wonderful camp, only less interesting than Carn Goch. Descending from the camp to the valley of the Nevern, you will find a valley-scene wild as any north or south, at the Gelli rocks, which look much more like a castle than does Castell Mawr. The river-cliff architecture there suggests the region of Don Quixote. Indeed, the rocks near Melin-y-Gigfran (Raven's Mill) may easily pass for enchanted, like those in the Cornish tale of the Trolls wrestling, if you chance that way at dusk.* One evening, driving over to Dinas Cross in a crazy gig, we certainly saw strange things there at nightfall. But then we had a driver, a small boy, who was not sure of the road, and we were light-headed from hunger after a railway journey.

Carn Engli may be ascended from the lane behind Newport Church, and from various points above in the upper road, which makes a detour to the Gwaen valley and Fishguard. The Gwaen cuts off Carn Engli from the westward heights of Precelly, to whose range it belongs: George

* Hunt's *Romances and Drolls of the West of England*, see p. 241: "The Hooting Cairn" (Cairn Kenidzhek).

Owen's picture of Carn Engli is as true now as the day it was "painted":—

"The high sharpe rocke over Newport, called Carn Englyn, supposed by the vulgar to take its appellative from a Cawr or giant of that name, is a very steepe and stony mountaine, having the toppe thereof sharp, and all rockes shewing from the E. and by N. like the upper part of the capital Greek omega (Ω). The pasture of this mountaine was given in common by Nicholaus filius Martini, then lord of Kemes, to the burgesses of his town of Newport, which they enjoy to this day, with divers other freedomes and liberties to them granted by divers charters yet extant and faire, sealed with his seale of the armes of the saide lordshipp of Kemes, but all of that antiquity that they are sans date. This mountaine is several miles in circuit, and surmounteth all other for good sheep pasture, both for fatting and soundness, and especially commodious in this, that noe snowe stayeth on it, by reason of the neernes of the sea, and that it is watered with fine and cleare springes. *Frenny-fawr*, the first and most easterly point of the long Presselly line, and this the last and most w., *Carn Englyn*, stand as captaine and lieutenant, the one leading the vannegarde, the other following the rere-warde, among whom *Cwm Cerwyn*, being neere middway between them, may well, for his high stature overlooking the rest, clayme the place of standard-bearer."

To Owen's account we may add that Carn Engli, like Moel Tri-garn, has many hut-circles within a brief walk westward of the chief carn, which is just a thousand feet above sea-level, and commands a superb view of nearly all the Welsh heights of consequence, from Precelly to Plynlimmon, from Cader Idris to the peaks which determine the great curved rampart of mountains around Cardigan Bay.

Precelly Mountain can be attacked from Newport if you are making that place your centre.

But if you work from Fishguard you can use the railway that skirts the mountain, take train ingloriously to Rosebush Station, whence the climbing of Precelly top is easy. Rosebush, in fact, is within an hour's easy climb of the summit, and if the adventure ends there it need not ask more than an afternoon holiday or the time between two trains.

But it must be held in mind that Precelly is a rather coy creature. She makes up for her smaller stature by her cloudy elusions. You may take train to her side on the clearest, bluest summer morning to find a white shawl hiding her pretty head. In fact, it is as well before starting to take the advice of some native who has used the "Top" as a sort of weather-glass for forty or fifty years. Venture then at your peril, even if he says decisively it is "goin' to be fa'r!" June and September are the months when clear days most do occur.

Rosebush itself is no more than a row of quarrymen's cottages with an adjacent hotel to cater for visitors. On leaving the station, turn to the left of the hotel and the cottages, and take the path ascending above the quarry. The track lies straight before, unmistakably making for the top of the nearer ascent. The whole climb need not occupy more than an hour, though in wet weather there are one or two swampy passages. From the first and highest of the summits Moel Cwm Cerwyn, or the "Top," you see southward all the mingled loveliness and dreariness of Pembrokeshire: its woods and sheltered vales, its curled, interminable coast-line and grey seaward levels. The woods about the Cleddau, almost direct south, at Slebech and Picton, partly

hidden, fill in a darker green space in late summer. To the left lie Carmarthen Bay and Worm's Head and the western end of Gower; to the right George Owen's "tree"—that is Milford Haven—less like a tree than a confused water-snake, some of its brown or blue folds hidden, Pembroke Castle set in its middle coil. Direct north, most impressive of all, are the Eifl mountains and part of Snowdon, seen across Cardigan Bay. Westward, or slightly south-westward, we have the peninsula and headland of St. David's—rather featureless in effect as seen from this height. St. David's Cathedral is hidden. But beyond the St. David's promontory and island spurs, on a very clear day with a north-westerly wind, the coast of Ireland can be spied like a lower sky.

One of the separate arms of Precelly, Freni Fawr ("Y Frenhin Fawr," or the Great King?) 1,287 feet above sea-level, becomes a very familiar landmark on the right as one travels by train along its skirts from Crymmych Arms to Cardigan; and from the former station it is only an hour's climb to the summit. Or, having ascended Precelly Top from Rosebush, the inveterate hill-walker who is not content will have no trouble in exploring the whole ridge eastwards to Moel Trigarn. Descending at Crymmych Arms, he can spend the night there. Moel or Foel Trigarn is so called because of its three great cairns. Many stone circles, or "cyttiau," are scattered on the slopes. An ancient Roman way runs along the five miles of mountain-top between Moel Trigarn and Moel Cwm Cerwyn, which was used by Welsh and Fleming too, to judge by the name "Via Flandrica," by which it went.

CHAPTER XXXII

CARDIGAN—CILGERRAN CASTLE—ST. DOGMELL'S—THE STORY OF PERGRIN—GWBERT-ON-SEA

At the time when Welsh legends were exported to France and Normandy, Cardigan was always a name to charm with; and something of that effect the place and its sleepy streets and quays, castle and bridge, contrive still to keep. It was "to a Castle hight Cardigan" that Sir Percival and Sir Agloval came riding once toward the end of the Quest of the Grail. But at midnight Percival stole away mysteriously. When you cross the bridge into the town, and spy the Castle, you wonder which road he took? Was the Priory into which he and Sir Ector wished to be carried next day St. Dogmell's?

In crossing Cardigan Bridge you leave Pembrokeshire—in which Cardigan railway station is placed—for the neighbour-county. The bridge—as old prints declare—made a better picture formerly, and a much better lounging-place, with bays at every parapet. When it was built the Castle commanded it, as Speed's map of the year 1610 shows. The Castle ruins have dwindled by half in the last three centuries, if we may take his view as at all accurate. Its curtain-wall, ivy grown, and a part of two gateway towers are all

that greet the eye now; and as the interior forms an adjunct to a private house, it is not open to every visitor. The old parish church lies off to the right of the Castle, but the stranger to Cardigan, if he wishes to exploit the town, will follow the usual route up the narrow ascent of Bridge Street. The entrance to the Castle is on the right hand, as we enter the High Street; and just before it stood the town "Cross," round which the open market used to be held, with the old Shire Hall, turned into a warehouse now, old Market Lane and St. Mary Street to fill in other details. One of the most puzzling of the street names in Speed's plan is "Pole Hey"—*i.e.*, "Y Pwllai." The Pwllai runs out into the foot of St. Mary Street, making a curve to the east of the old town wall, for Cardigan was a walled town, needing its defences to keep out freebooters like Maelgan. But the siege of Cardigan by Cromwell's men in the Civil War worked havoc in town walls and Castle alike.

Cardigan Church, as it stands amid its ecclesiastical elms and beeches, is an architectural medley which age has tempered and made into a whole of some dignity. The big battlemented tower has a capital outlook from its platform, worth the toil of the many stairs leading to it. It is not of any age to speak of, dating from 1710 onwards—the old tower having collapsed a few years before. The chancel is an extreme contrast—a fine Decorated building, with airy pinnacles to its machicolated roof. Close to the church the Priory stands upon the site of a small Black Friars' house, only one or two fragments of whose walls remain.

The Priory is famous because here for some years lived the "Matchless Orinda," Mrs. Catherine

Philipps, who came hither from London on her marriage in 1647, a girl of sixteen, to a local squire James Philipps, who was High Sheriff of the county in 1649. The "Matchless Orinda" died in 1664; her poems, born of a delicately imaginative mind, are still to be read with something of the wonder that Henry Vaughan, a young poet at that time, felt when he spoke of them as a miracle—

> "Which Nature brought but once to pass,
> A Muse such as Orinda was."

From the Priory gate you can step quickly to the riverside, as I daresay Orinda often did; and there at the Cardigan Boating Club's house, a little further up the strand, you can hire a boat and row up to Kilgarren. Once with Mr. Walter Spurrell of Carmarthen, I made this voyage, and we had to haul the boat over two tough gravelly reaches; but we had our solace in the deep, shut-in, overgrown Teivy pools, where the sea-birds met with shy river-fowl, wild duck, and red-throated divers, and in our arrival at last under the broken banks of the Castle at the mouth of the Cwm Plysgog.

Up above, a closer acquaintance with the walls was not so inspiriting. The site there at the meeting of the Teivy with Nant Plysgog amid the steep slate-cliffs is fine enough for everything. There is an adventurous tower, too, where the ravines, big and little, meet, an outlook tower or *guérite*, which stirs the besieger's blood as he prepares to rush the bank. But the boys of the quarry-village near by had left the stairs, when we stormed them, in a condition to repel any invader. Howbeit it is a glorious structure, and

Photo by] [*Prof. J. Morgan Lewis, Aberystwyth.*

CORACLES ON THE TEIVY.

CARDIGAN BRIDGE.

From an old painting.

To face p. 345.

the two strong citadel-towers, seen across the ward, are worthy of the old threatening name Cilgerran bore in the Castle time.

The first Norman castle here was begun by Hugo de Montgomery. Then Gilbert Strongbow tried his hand on it. Rhys ap Griffith took it from the Normans, and held it at his pleasure. Then came William Marshall, twenty-five years after Rhys's death, and began a castle on a bigger scale altogether. Previously Giraldus had seen the Castle on his "Itinerary" of 1188, and spoken of the salmon that swam and the beavers that built their dams in the Teivy stream. Joan, whose grandfather was William Marshall, had Cilgerran as part of her *dot* when she married William de Valence: and this led the Castle into many fighting combinations. But it remained intact all through the gunless mediæval days, and had its great commotion only in the Civil War, when Cromwell's guns made the big breach in the south-western tower, and prepared the place for the slow ruin which you see at work.

Cilgerran Church, rebuilt in 1855, has a good tower, recently retopped but older than the rest of the building. In the churchyard, on the side nearest the gate, is an Ogam stone, the monument of Trenegussus, son of Macutrenus—so far as Sir John Rhys has deciphered the much-worn ogams. In Cilgerran Church lies buried Dr. Thomas Phaer, who translated Virgil's Æneid into English, and who lived at the old mansion called "Forest," amid the trees of Cefn Drum, which we passed on our right on the way up the river. He died in 1560.

Cilgerran is now a great quarrymen's village; and it was once a town with aldermen and every-

thing proper about it. The Cefn Quarries, which lie within a few minutes of Cilgerran railway station, and the upper village, which its inhabitants call *Cnwca*—it is said from some old tumps in the near neighbourhood.

If you go to Cilgerran by road your route can be varied on the way back by a path which leads from Cwm Plysgog and up the bank beyond it, past Dr. Phaer's old house, through the lane under the trees of Cefn Drum, and so across the railway and Pentood Marsh to the town.

A mile or less from the town the Abbey of St. Dogmell's—"Abbaty Llandydoch"—has little of its fine church and attractive buildings left; and the present church is a poor enough apology for it. In the village retired Welsh sea-captains and Teivy salmon fishermen live on the long-extended street and in the cottages beyond posted on the green banks and foot-hills. You turn to the left for St. Dogmell's on reaching the Bridge-end side of Cardigan bridge; and gaining the outskirts, have the church on your left just beyond Cwm Tegwel. The Abbey ruins lie chiefly within the Vicarage grounds; one of the transepts, some of the main walls and cloister walls, and some of the kitchen and domestic offices and a detached guest-house, are about all that remains of them. An Ogam stone, that was carried off, and then by good hap recovered, stands against the refectory wall; the letters read: "Sagrani Fili Cunotami"; but who Sagranus or Cunotamus was I leave you to conjecture. St. Dogmell's parish church of to-day is some fifty years old or more; and is not interesting.

On a hot July afternoon St. Dogmell's seems almost interminable; but at length, if you keep

the riverside road, turning off from the village, you pass a coastguard station and then half a mile further on reach an estuary-side strand, a sort of mixture of village green and sands. This strand is known as the "Poppit"; and the local guide-book hints that a watering-place has been projected there by a company. The two or three available lodging-houses near it are in great demand in the summer and autumn.

Beyond the "Poppit" you come to Penrhyn Castle Bay, with the river-bar between it and Gwbert Bay opposite. Lifeboat and coastguard station are within the west scoop of the bay; the hill above Penrhyn Farm commands a fine view of the coast, up and down; and farm roads and lanes that hug the coast southward can be followed on to Moylgrove, past Pen-yr-Afr and Pwll Gronant—a rather desolate sea-walk on a grey day. There is little to see at Moglgrove, but a mile from the village is Ceibwr Bay—a good spot for a stolen bathe. Here, and at the Witch's Cauldron in the next sea-cwm, was a famous old smugglers' haunt. The Cauldron is a most mischievous cave and in its depths are fabulous treasures if they could only be got at?

Across the water lies Gwbert-on-Sea, whose downs and sands, rocks and caves, are contrived after a rather seductive fashion. It has a good safe beach for timid bathers, and deep-water inlets for divers and good swimmers. The road thither from Cardigan was rough, with loose sandy stretches interspersed, when I cycled over it; but no doubt that is altered now. At one point beyond the grassy dunes and sand burrows of Towyn Warren I remember a wonderful outlook over the Teivy estuary and its surroundings

on both sides the river-mouth, including St. Dogmell's and the hills about Newport and Precelly, and the sea bright beyond Gwbert. It called to mind the spacious approach to Southerndown on just such another bright-aired afternoon.

If you go out fishing off the mouth of the Teivy, you should recall the story of Pergrin and the Mermaid. Pergrin was a St. Dogmell's fisherman who one day spied in a rocky cleft near Pen Cemmes a sea-maid engaged at the immemorial task of combing her beautiful hair. He contrived to seize her and take her off to his boat, the while she wept piteously, her hair all dishevelled about her, begging him for mercy. But he would not give way to her cries until in an agony she said, "Pergrin, let me go, and I will give thee three shouts in the hour of need!"

So, what with wonder and fear, he let her go to walk the street of the deep and visit her lovers. Days and weeks went by without a sign of her. But one sultry afternoon, when the sea was calm enough, and the fishermen were plying their craft with no thought of a storm, Pergrin suddenly heard a voice in the water near his boat. It was the *Mor-forwyn*, or sea-maiden, whose upturned face and floating hair appeared like froth in the salt water, as she cried—

"PERGRIN! PERGRIN! PERGRIN!
Haul in! Haul in! Haul in!"

He and his mate at once obeyed, and hauled in their nets and made for the bar. By the time they got to Pwll Cam the most terrible storm broke that the coast had known. Twice nine other fishermen who had sailed out to the fishing-

grounds were caught in the storm and drowned. Only Pergrin and his mate stood safe on land, thanks to the three timely shouts given them by the sea-maid.

The same story, or one very like it, is told on the coast of Lleyn, Carnarvonshire; and it is even hinted that this is only a secondary version supplied by Gwynionydd.* But there are mermaid stories on every coast, and I fancy there is much folk-lore and sea-lore yet waiting to be recovered at St. Dogmell's.

* See *Celtic Folklore*, by (Sir) John Rhys, ch. ii., "The Fairies' Revenge" (pp. 163, 164).

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE CARDIGAN COAST—ABERPORTH—LLANGRANOG AND TRAETHSAITH—NEW QUAY—LLANDYSILIO—GOGO—ABERAERON

ABERPORTH is some 7½ miles north of Cardigan town and about six or seven miles round the coast from Gwbert-on-Sea. Well situated on the porth or small harbour that gives it its name, it has two or three stretches of good sands, and it is yet unspoilt by too many villas and improvements. From Gwbert and northward, on past Aberporth and Traethsaith to Penbryn and Llangranog, this part of the coast is well built.

Aberporth, however, is a civil resort; that is to say, it has a choice of houses—bungalows, villas with gardens and tennis lawns, and at least three kinds of jam in the village commissariat. Long ago it was discovered by an artist looking for a new neighbourhood, and he is said to have made a fortune in Italian seascapes and landscapes painted here. There is just enough seafaring life in the harbour to serve artistic ends. About once a week a steamer arrives from Cardigan and Bristol. Sailing-boats, rowing-boats, fishing-boats, and even a small yacht may be hired for a sail round Pen Cribach and the Allt Goch cliffs. For bathing there are the Dyffryn

sands and the beach at Cribach Bay, and one or two little coves, when the tide is available.

The *porth* has on one side the narrow neck which ends at Fath Gareg, and on the other the bold headland rising from Cribach Bay and the cliffs of Cribach and Allt Goch to a height of five hundred feet or so. There are caves like Dolwen to be reached by boat or by scrambling, on both sides of Aberporth, and fishing in the harbour produces whiting, rock-codling, plaice &c., while further out when the mackerel come, there is every chance of making a fair haul any morning. The name Ogof (Welsh, a "cave") seems to be used here sometimes for the sharp indented creeks which abound on this coast, as well as for a cave proper with roof and the rest complete.

Traethsaith, another of the newer seaside places of this Cardigan coast, stretches up a green cwm from the opening and sheltered hollow at the mouth of the Bern. The older cottages, hidden in the cwm and within a brief walk of the sea, form at one point such a rural hamlet as one might expect to find deep in the country. The sands below at the aber of the Bern are very good, with a gradual descent and a beach for bathing. Northwards the stretch of sands on toward Penbryn is one of the finest this coast can offer you anywhere. When the tide serves the beach along the sands from Traethsaith and past the next rocky corner affords a long rambling-ground. It can be extended too at will by taking to the cliffs beyond the Penbryn cwm, and exploring Llangranog and, still further away, Ynys Lochtyn.

Penbryn, a little more than a mile north of

Traethsaith, has a nice old church, St. Michael's, perfectly suiting its position by the sea; and a pleasant sea-glen or cwm on the Hoffnant. In connection with this cwm and the Llanborth beach below lingering tales of the smugglers who landed their run-goods here, and hid them in the glen, are told. Llanborth, if this be the same as Llongborth, is famous in Arthurian tradition?

"In Llongborth, I saw the battle
And biers beyond number,
And men blood-stained from Geraint's sword.

In Llongborth, I saw the spurs
Of horsemen who did not flinch from the spears;
And the wine-drinking from the bright glass.

In Llongborth, I saw the weapons
Of men, and blood fast dropping."

In Llongborth, adds the poet, "I saw Arthur,' and in Llongborth "was Geraint slain."

The glen or cwm of Nant Llanborth above is worth diving into. The cliffs near Penbryn and between that and Llangranog are traversed by a footpath skirting their brinks with occasional diversions. The sea links, as we discovered, produce (what is not common in seaside pastures) plentiful mushrooms. Traces of an old camp are to be seen about half a mile from Traeth, back on the high ground of Cnwc y Rhaglyn; and there is an old stone (which Sir John Rhys has recorded) about a mile south, the other side of the Penbryn hollow, in a corner of a field above the road near the descent to Dyffryn Bern. At Llanborth Mill, where we once ate blackberry tart and crumpogs, the traditions of the neighbourhood may be dis-

Photo by] [*W. R. Hall, Aberystwyth.*

DANIEL ROWLANDS, LLANGEITHO.

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cussed. Castell-Prudd and Castell-y-Dolig and the Gaer may be invaded afterwards, on the road to Blaenporth from Penbryn.

Llangranog is another village tucked away in a cwm, with just enough space at its outlet for a beach between the steep cliffs that enclose it. Above, the houses lie snug and sheltered, so that the bracing Cardigan air is not too trying for delicate folk. The easiest way to the village is to ride or drive from Newcastle Emlyn. If bicycling, beware of the last hill and zigzag to the head of the village from the high moorlands beyond New Inn. A lodging for a night—or longer—can be had down at the lower end of the village, where a couple of inns and some ugly seaside houses are scattered among the original cottages of the hamlet.

Readers of the Welsh novels and romances of "Allen Raine" will find no great trouble in adjusting some of the scenes of *Torn Sails*, *A Welsh Witch*, etc., to the surroundings of Llangranog and the coast ranging south to Traethsaith past Penbryn Church.

Ascending past some old limekilns on the north side of the beach, a steep cliff path leads to a tidal gap and across the table rocks and seaweedy pools which divide Ynys Lochtyn from the line of the coast. The top of Ynys Lochtyn is grassy, a tempting retreat; but there is only an hour or two at low water in which the island can be explored. One or two fine caves on the east side have changed, it is said, within the last twenty years, owing to the falling of the rock; but the rock still makes stubborn fight against the sea and its inroads. Lochtyn is not a place-name of Welsh origin, but akin to the Irish *lough* and Scottish *loch*. The "men of Lochtyn," says an old local

gossip, "are the Norsemen; Llochtyn with the *ll*," but is he not thinking of the "men of Lochlyn"?

Dinas Lochtyn, whose side we skirted on the way to the island, is an old camp, possibly a fastness used by pirates on this coast? A climb to the top of it will show how good a sea-rover's camp and watch-out point it was. On the other southern side of Llangranog, and near the field-path to Llanborth, are some vanishing old walls on the site, easily traced, known as Castell Bach; and nearer the sea a trenched and embanked camp, so different in kind both to the Castell and the camp Dinas Lochtyn that it suggests well the slow succession of the strongholds of far different races built on this coast in ages and periods widely apart.

Every other resident at New Quay is said to be a retired sea-captain; hence the number of houses appears to provide for a much larger crowd than can find quarters. There is a sad story of an improvident old gentleman in a white top-hat who had to sit on his portmanteau all night on the pier—every available bed in the place being occupied. The new Cardigan light railway, if it comes, will make a great difference to the New Quay people. The town stands well posted in the curve of New Quay Bay, three successive white steps of terraces rising between the pier and the "Head." Past their lower end runs New Quay High Street on its way to the pier and harbour. When the Bristol steamer and other craft come in the scene there recalls the good days of this miniature sea-port sixty years ago. At the pier-end a lighthouse gives the passing vessels, and those that in storm try to make New Quay harbour by night, a better chance than in the days when the cottage candles were

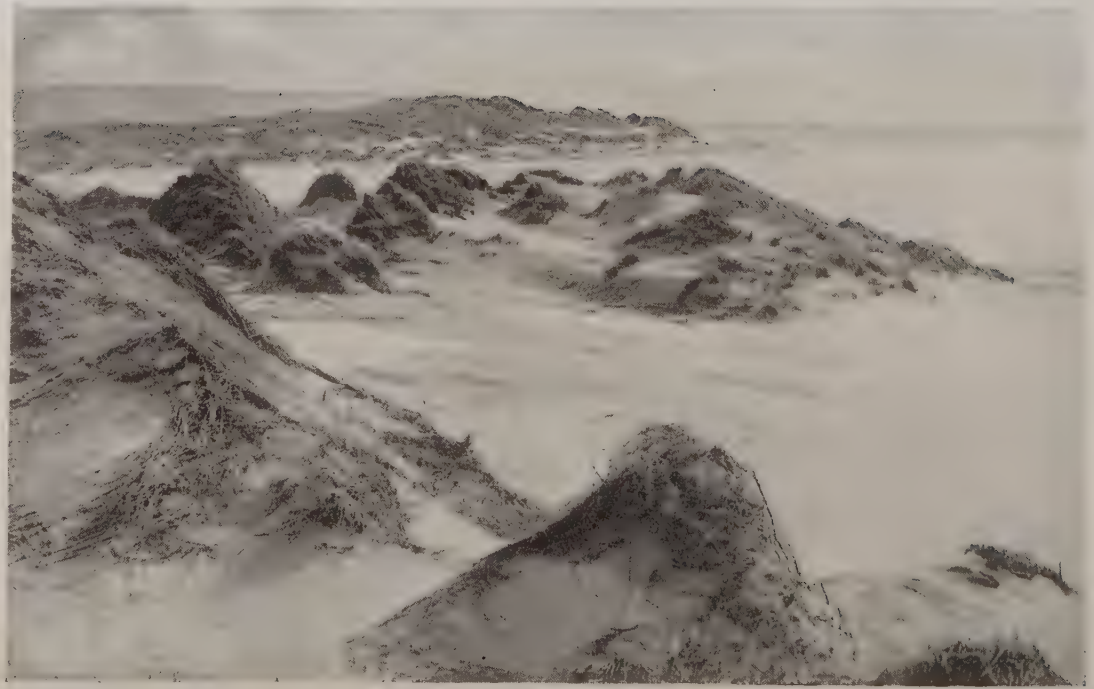

Photo by] [*W. R Hall, Aberystwyth.*

SAND DUNES ON THE COAST.

the only beacons. Standing on Tower Hill you get a fair view of the curve from the Head on to Llanina. The sands vary in places, and change after heavy tides, exposing new patches of pebble or shingle. Whiting, pollack, codlings, and other sea-fish abound here. A good morning's fishing will often bring in more than the hungriest family can eat; and if you are boating you can row out past the Head and round Careg Walltog to the Birds' Rock, which later summer visitors do not see at its best. If you are storm-bound ashore, you can go north to Llanllwchhaiarn Church, or south to Llanina Church. An old raid of the "Black Pagans" on this cove accounts possibly for the dedication of the latter church to Ina, King of the West Saxons. But some say the church was originally Llan Ilar. The small building is not, however, very interesting. But to wander from Llanina up the Gido stream to *Cwm Gido* and the old house at *Wern*, half an hour's walk or more, offers a welcome exchange for the glare of the sands on a July day. Now a farmstead, Wern is a house of character and tradition. In 1485 the master of Wern was one Einon ap Daffydd Llwyd; and when Harry, Earl of Richmond, marched through South Wales from Milford, he is said to have slept at this house, and in the room which is to be seen, with the very bed he slept in.

Some two miles and a half S.S.W. of New Quay and you reach the scattered village of Llandysiliogo-go—which is well worth a long afternoon. The name comes from St. Tysilio and (possibly) "gogofau"=caves, as suggested by "Non" (Miss Gwladys Evans) in her prize-essay on the place-names of the district. It is one of the few remaining parishes in Wales, she says, "uncorrupted by

English customs and speech"; and she quotes the late Stephen Evans, J.P., who said that if Welsh should ever come to die, it would last be heard in "one of the dingles of Llandysilio-go-go," when some poor old woman would ejaculate with her dying gasp—"Ach y fi!" Of the two or three historical houses in the parish, the most famous was that where Henry VII. was feasted on his march northward to fight for the crown at Bosworth, and which gives a name to "Cwmtydur"—Tydur's cwm or dingle—*Tydur*, after Tudor, it is suggested. The remains of this house are not now to be seen. It stood about half a mile from Traeth Cwmtydur, up the cwm. The little stream that passes through the dingle to the sea is "the Dewi," which flows down from Ffynnon-ddewi (David's spring), which is situate some five miles away, near Wervilbrook, and to be found between the fourteenth and fifteenth milestones on the right side of the road from Cardigan to Aberaeron. The story is that St. David was on his way from St. David's or Ty-ddewi in Pembrokeshire to Henfynyw near Aberaeron, and fell athirst at this point, and there asking a blessing on the dry crust he took from his wallet, was rewarded by the springing forth of this spring at his feet.

Aberaeron still wears something of its old sailor-like air when the boat comes in from Bristol; and when the coach arrives from Lampeter of an evening, the town is like one in the other-world of Dickens. Then the scene on the quay or in the street is heartening to witness to those who feel sentimental about the old order of the road. The town occupies what was once the delta of the Aeron, when the river had two outlets. The Vale of Aeron, whose charms have

been often sung, well and ill, brings in the highway from the east at a breakneck descent.

Once travelling across from Llanwrda, G. R. and I bicycled to Lampeter, where we were brought up by heavy rain. There we visited the College Library (it was not term-time and the place seemed deserted) and loitered over the rare ballads and rarer tomes. Towards seven in the evening we saw our rain-beaten inn-windows suffused with a sudden pale lemon-coloured sunset light, which filled the line of sky over the roofs and chimneys opposite. The rain had gone. Tired of being cooped up, we decided there and then to take the road for it, and press on with all speed to Aberaeron. A last flying shower caught us on the bleak hill near Rhyd-y-Gof (Smith's Ford), and as it passed it seemed to drag part of the daylight away with it. At Llanfihangel the evening had declared itself, and a cold gusty wind began to blow against us from the sea. We rode fast, however, down the Vale of Aeron and did not need to light up till we reached Llanerch. Unluckily, three miles further on, a rougher gust of wind blew out one lamp, and on opening the other at a convenient lull, a second gust blew out that too. Riding on without lights, thereupon we found ourselves presently benighted at Hen Geraint in the darkest stretch of road, I believe, that is in Cardiganshire. It was a completely strange road to us too, and as it seemed to accelerate its gradient we did not dare to ride and had to grope our way nervously at a snail's pace, till at length we sighted a light—the first lamps of Aberaeron. It was one of those adventures that bring back the sensation of the unknown road and the pitchy night that counted

for much in the old road-faring tales. We tried to remember Geraint's plight, but now to quicken our apprehension there came the smell and the sound of the sea, blown up through the darkness, which conjured up Sir Bors instead. One night Bors left his quarters in just such a sea-vale and "at a broken wall rode out" and reached the sea itself, and took ship. And "the ship departed into the sea, and went so fast that him-seemed the ship went flying; and it was so dark that he might know no man." But we did not really discover the sea till next day. When at last we came to a halt fairly in the midst of Aberaeron, with a few lighted windows blinking at us, we felt like people who had stepped into reality from a dream. We found the place—inns and lodging-houses—crowded with holiday visitors, and had extreme trouble in getting quarters anywhere. We had to be content then with a very small bedroom, and for breakfast next morning we had bacon so rusty that it seemed to infect the whole neighbourhood. We were glad to change quarters as the day wore on.

We were surprised next day to find so urban a savour about Alban Square. For the town, despite its old-fashioned air, can only claim about a century's flourish. Its pier was built in 1807, and its good days came soon after. From the perch at the end of the pier you can see a wide circuit of distant mountains northward—Plinlimmon, Cader Idris, a glimpse of Snowdon, and the curve of Cardigan Bay. You can take boat there for a brief voyage to New Quay Head and the Bird Rock, or a change of transit can be had by taking the "Aberaeron express," which has the effect of a rescue by line and cradle from

a wreck without the terrors. The sensation is more complete if it is full tide. Over the harbour you find Trinity Church, a new one comparatively, with a tall tower. The old parish church lies half an hour's walk away at Hen Fynyw; for the town stands in two parishes.

Aberaeron has a racing-track (in Alban Square) where wheelman race every August, and a chalybeate spring. The well is free to all comers, and runs no risk of being converted into a fashionable spa. Dr. Burghardt, of Manchester, in an epistle to the Aberaeronians, says of this water :—

"The Chalybeate Spring is certainly one of the best in the kingdom, it is a *carbonate* of the protoxide of iron, dissolved in a *very pure water.* The common chalybeate springs are *sulphate* of the protoxide of iron dissolved in water much charged with sulphates of calcium and magnesium and salt, hence the iron in the common chalybeate springs is not nearly so easily assimilated by the system as the iron in the carbonate or true chalybeate waters. Chemically speaking the iron in the sulphate springs is not so easily torn away from the sulphuric acid with which it is combined, consequently the action in the human system is much slower, and less efficient. With carbonate springs this is not the case, as carbonate of iron is one of the most easily decomposed iron salts. Your Chalybeate is a *mild* one, which I think makes it more pleasant for most people."

Talsarn Mountain, the backbone of mid-Cardigan, and its eastern outliers above Cwrtmawr and Llangeitho do their best to keep the Aeron from finding any outlet at all. For some miles they seem to be succeeding, but at the point where

the Gwenffrwd joins the Aeron, its course is already south-west, and in five or six miles more it has reached between Talsarn and Llanlea, its southern limit, and turned northward, which course it maintains with such deviation as hill-streams have to the sea.

On leaving Aberaeron to explore the vale, you follow the Lampeter road, over the upper bridge, through Hengeraint Woods, diverge to pass Llanerch-Aeron Church and Llanaeron, below which a rapid stream joins the Aeron. Here is one of the pleasantest loitering-places in the vale. Tri-Crug-Aeron, or Trichrug, another triple-cairned height, is the southern end of Talsarn Mountain, that rises there to over a thousand feet. Walking from the top of Trichrug eastwards, and down to Talsarn, a Cardigan poet once wrote a song some lines of which still bear quoting:—

"Sweet Aeron's vale, unknown in song,
Demands the warbling lyre:
Shall silver Aeron glide along,
And not a bard inspire?
What bard that Aeron sees can fail
To sing the charms of Aeron vale?

There golden treasures swell the plains,
And herds and flocks are there;
And there the god of plenty reigns
Triumphant all the year;
The nymphs are gay, the swains are hale:
Such blessings dwell in Aeron's vale."

The spectacle seen from Trichrug is well worth a climb, and may easily be had by taking the cross-road over the river at Newbridge, or Pont Newydd up to Cilcennen. This road passes along

Photo by] [*W. R. Hall, Aberystwyth.*

MONK'S CAVE, CARDIGAN COAST.

To face p. 360.

the western side of the hill, after leaving Ty Mawr, and half an hour's climb brings one to the cairns and remains of old burial-grounds.

From Newbridge, about four miles from the starting-point, you have another league to go to Ystrad, where the church is worth a halt, if only to see the square pillars that divide its single aisle and the tombs to the Lisburnes and others. Mr. J. M. Howell, an Aberaeron authority, reminds us of the great family of Dyffryn Aeron, the Lloyds or "Llwydiaid," memories of whose tenure for hundreds of years are scattered all along the vale. Two of the most famous mediæval Davids wrote poems to their descendants, man and maid. Ieuan, one of the family, was himself a poet in the time of Owain Glyndwr, whose praise he sang. It was his father who built Parc Rhydderch in the thirteenth century; and the house of Parc Rhydderch, as it now exists, is, even in a country of old houses, "marvellous antiquate." Thence comes one of the oldest MSS. of the Mabinogion, the "Llyfr Parc Rhydderch." A son of the famous old Sir Rhys ap Thomas married a daughter of the Lloyds, and the Prices of Gogerddan come of the same stock. But ancient houses come to an end; and the last heiress of the race, Miss Lloyd of Cilbwn (a seat not far from the older seat of the family at Cilpwll, Parc Rhydderch), was murdered by her serving-man in 1792—mean extinction of a noble tree! However, as a matter of fact, many offshoots still do exist in the vale.

Llangeitho lies about one mile north-east of Cilpwll, which is at the lower end of the wooded glen of Gwenffrwd, where traces of the mediæval forest-lands seem to linger.

The more direct road from Llanlear to Llan-

geitho is that viâ Talsarn, when Cilpwll hamlet and the house of Parc Rhydderch are both passed in turn. Parc Rhydderch is one of those old houses in which the soul of a neighbourhood is laid away. With Llangeitho is associated one of the most fervent lights the Welsh Church ever lit—so fervent, indeed, that the authorities grew afraid of it, and tried to put it out! The light was Daniel Rowlands, Curate of Llangeitho for some years; his bishop, deeming him a firebrand, bade him desist, so Rowlands lost a parish and gained a country. His statue stands by the chapel; his grave is in the churchyard, but where no one seems to know. Another fifty years, and the Church of Wales will make late amends perhaps to her too inspired curate. Neither the parish church nor the great chapel of the village to-day are those in which Rowlands officiated; but both occupy the old sites. The fine plate in Meyrick's *Cardiganshire*, showing the curious carved oak-screen, leaves one with some natural regret for the old church. Rowlands' statue, though crudely designed and disappointing, is said to be a good likeness. He died in 1790. It is worth note that for some time before his deprivation by the bishop, Rowlands served Nant Cwnlle, Llangeitho, and Llanddewi Brefi Churches—*i.e.*, all three were in his charge as sole incumbent—for a salary of £10 a year. In spite of all, Rowlands continued his attachment to the church, and if he had had his will would never have separated from it.

CHAPTER XXXIV

ABERYSTWYTH—THE THREE TOWNS—AN ATLANTIC STORM — THE COLLEGE — THE NATIONAL LIBRARY—IEUAN THE TALL—DEVIL'S BRIDGE

THERE are really three Aberystwyths, not one: the old Cardiganshire borough and market town, the thronged watering-place of July, August and September, and the 'Varsity town of the other months. To most people it is the second of the three that counts; recalling, when they think of it, the sun-heated broad curve of esplanade, saved by the most delicious sea-breeze ever cooled over salt-water. And the sea outlook across Cardigan Bay and the old site of the drowned "Hundred," towards Snowdon, the Eifl peaks, or Cyrn Du, is like a vision of Cymru Fynyddig, the true mountainous Wales, while the air, sea-borne or mountain-borne, is of a kindred savour.

One February, after an influenza, a wise doctor ordered us to Aberystwyth. We were hardly able to walk when we arrived, and my fellow-traveller's face from illness, weariness, and train-*ennui* was forlorn as Mariana's. What ill fate had sent us from home, we wondered, to languish and contract pneumonia in a seaside lodging, where the damp walls would surely have salt-sand in the mortar?

But bright sea-coal fires (to call them so because the name has a savour) when we arrived, and bright suns for three days, changed our temperature. On the third day we climbed a hill; on the fourth a telegram came asking for a promised article on an old play, and it was written and posted on the sixth. On the seventh we went (in a snowstorm and bitter weather) to Strata Florida; and on the eighth returned home in obstreperous health. If there seems an element of extravagance in this, it is entirely due to the Aberystwyth air.

The winter pleasures of the town are those that somehow or other come first to mind in the retrospect. The kind of salt-water you may have to taste can be gathered from the accompanying print of the Esplanade during the superb storm of December, 1910: the finest, by all accounts, and the most destructive, known on this exposure of the coast within living memory; threatening enough almost to recall the deluge that sent Cantref-y-Gwaelod, the Bottom Hundred, under the sea. The storm began with a stiff SSW. breeze, which grew into a seventy-mile an hour gale. With this, and a poor ebb before it, the tide was at its usual height three hours before time. A little later, and it had begun to handle the great concrete blocks of the pavement and the coping of the sea-wall like so much brickwork. These huge missiles were thrown across the road and against the railings of the houses, as in some oceanic ecstasy and mad bombardment. Basement windows were smashed, areas filled with gravel, and doors battered in. The shingle lay in some places two and three feet deep afterwards on the Promenade.

"The Hostel and the houses adjoining bore the

Photo by] [*W. R. Hall, Aberystwyth.*

A STORM AT ABERYSTWYTH (DECEMBER, 1910).

To face p. 364.

brunt of the storm and suffered most damage. Immense waves struck the sea-wall a little below Victoria House School and ran along the face to a point where the wall makes a bend slightly northward, when the waves were thrown up to an immense height and tons of water fell on to the pavement on the sea side and rushed in rolling waves to the houses opposite, battering down the railings, smashing in doors and windows, and entering the basements. Sometimes a long line of water, hundreds of feet long, rose in the air after impact with the sea-wall. At other times an isolated mass of water rose and was broken up by the wind in blinding spray which completely hid the Hostel and adjoining houses from view. Between eight and nine o'clock, when the tide was at its height, a tremendous sea struck the high electric lamps and three were knocked out, leaving the end of the Terrace in darkness. The lamp near the Queen's Hotel was also extinguished; but the one opposite the 'Plynlymon' weathered the storm and gave a brilliant light until the current was turned off at midnight."

One envies those inhabitants who were not actually enswamped the chance of seeing this rare spectacle.

The sea made a bold attempt to take a degree in the College too, which is already a building with an eventful history. It has had losses; been burnt with fire and gutted; been made into a monster hotel at huge cost; then sold for a mere song to become a beacon of the Welsh Renaissance.

"The Cambrian Tourist and Post-chaise Companion" (5th ed., 1821) speaks of the original structure as "a fantastic house in the Castellated form" consisting of "three octagon towers with a

balcony towards the sea." The writer adds that the fragments of the Castle are from hence viewed to great advantage: a statement which helps to suggest that in the new transmutation of Wales the citadel has been changed from a material to an intellectual fortress.

Long ago Owen Glyndwr had among his reconstructive schemes that of a university: companion idea to that of a Welsh Parliament which we shall yet, I daresay, see realised too? What would he have said if, when he was investing Aberystwyth Castle, he had foreseen how as its walls crumbled the other Castell Ddysg whose vision he had nursed was to wax and become a thing accomplished and a Welsh landmark?

It has fostered many men who have achieved—Celtic scholars, lyric poets, and patriots like the late T. E. Ellis, M.P.

The latest Castle of Aberystwyth is the National Library, whose site stands fair on the hill above the town. Years ago, I remember being sadly troubled to get Elizabethan books at short notice for an unexpected piece of work. If Professor C. H. Herford had not happened to be living there, and if he had not hospitably let me ransack his shelves, I should have had to go back to London. Now the bookman will have his citadel. For its provenance one of the greatest bookhunters Wales has had, Sir John Williams the physician, has been collecting manuscripts, folios, rarities, especially Celtic ones, and spending a fortune in the search. And others have worked as tirelessly in their own fields, men like Mr. J. H. Davies of Cwrtmawr, born bookhunters, if such a thing is conceivable. If Sir John and his fellow-conspirators have for half a century been collecting

and buying books and libraries, it is in order to endow this National Library as it deserves. Before the end Aberystwyth will have one of the richest libraries of Cymric and Celtic books and MSS. in the world. This year—1911—will see the foundation-stone laid. Research in such a library should, because of the ozone forced by the west wind through the windows and between the shelves, be accomplished with twice the ordinary dispatch.

Among the treasures here are the Hengwrt and Peniarth MSS. collected by Robert Vaughan, of Hengwrt (who died in 1666), the friend of John Selden and Archbishop Usher. Finally they passed to Mr. W. R. M. Wynne, of Peniarth, who, being without a direct heir, sold them to Sir John Williams on condition that they should go in the end to the National Library, if established at Aberystwyth. Mr. Wynne died in January, 1909, and so the MSS. have become its property. They include the oldest manuscripts of the old Welsh Laws, the oldest of the Mabinogion, the oldest of the Holy Grail romance, and a vast number of mediæval poems. "The Black Book of Carmarthen," however, is the prime of this splendid antiquity. Its vellum leaves contain the earliest script we have of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; and they open with the duologue between Merlin and Taliesin on the battle of Arderydd.

Dr. Gwenogvryn Evans, who has tabled and catalogued these priceless things, and who knows more about Welsh MSS. than any man living, says it is not merely the largest, but the finest, library of the kind that exists or can exist, "thanks to the prescience and skill" of Robert Vaughan "in

bringing together the noblest monuments of Kymric history and literature." Vaughan is only one of many who have worked in silence to prepare for the building up at length of this Celtic library.

The librarian, Mr. John Ballinger, shows too in his account what the contemporary vigilance of such a library has to be, if it is to fulfil its office of the perfect record of a nation and its people. Newspapers, broadsides, Eisteddfod-ana, local pamphlets, religious documents, and all kinds of ephemerides have to be gathered up and put into organic shape and sequence. Everything that is a record has to be kept. "Local ballads, for instance, often deal with events of which there is no other record. One such case occurred recently. A sheep-dog on the Plynlymon range took to sheep-killing, and wrought great havoc, but defied all efforts to track and destroy it. Ultimately Sir Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse, of Gogerddan, took out his hounds and ran it down, and it was killed, to the great relief of the farmers. A local poet narrated the event in rhyme, which was printed on a broadside. The circulation was entirely local. Yet there is an element of romance in the story sufficient to furnish forth a modern novel." All these fugitive pieces have to be captured on the wing and put into safe-keeping here. A collection that ranges from one of the finest Chaucer MSS. to the latest ballad is like to become a goal of studious and librarious pilgrims from all the world over as time goes on.

"One division in the National Library is called the Department of Documents, a section in which it is hoped to make a collection of things mainly for future use. By way of illustration of what is

intended, the Thomason Collection of Civil War Tracts may be cited. These ephemeral publications of a troubled time are individually of restricted interest, but arranged chronologically as they are in the valuable catalogue issued a couple of years ago by the British Museum, they form a record, as Carlyle said, 'Worth all the sheepskins.' If carefully collected over a long series of years, and arranged under subjects, or topographically, whichever may be best for each item, the flotsam and jetsam of to-day will be the gold-dust of the future." *

One thinks of the unlucky scholar-vagabond, Ieuan Brydydd Hir—Evan the Long (or Tall) Poet—in watching the rise of this great library endowed with some of the very MSS. he spent his days in getting. He was a Cardiganshire man; author of that early anthology, "Specimens of the Ancient Welsh Poetry" (1764), which helped to give the poet Gray ideas for his Welsh subjects. Born under a troubled star, Evan the Long was fortunate in going to school at Ystrad Meurig under a master like Edward Richard, a true pastoral poet by grace and nature. He showed on leaving school what a disinterested soul was his by making over his Cardigan patrimony to a younger brother, in order to go to Oxford. There he found other lore than there is in books, and learnt the easier grace of wine. He left without a degree; and then he became a vagrom curate, of doubtful habits, never holding any charge long, and continually collecting and continually losing books. We might have surprised him any day on the road in Cardigan-

* "The National Library of Wales" (by Mr. John Ballinger), *Journal of the Welsh Bibliographical Society*, February, 1911.

shire carrying a bundle of them wrapt in a check handkerchief.

He spent some time at Aberystwyth; and even when he was not there himself kept a room going in which to house his precious books and MSS. In a letter to a correspondent, unnamed, he writes:—

"I have a large collection of books at Aber Ystwyth, and a room for which I pay three pounds a year. My collection of MSS. likewise is there, and I am afraid must be in a great measure spoiled by dampness and want of fire in the room."

He also speaks of having spent two guineas in advertising for pupils in order to start a school in the town, and makes it plain that his "present distressful situation" of a curate without a cure was in danger of growing chronic.

One verse of his might almost be written up in the entrance hall of the National Library. In Welsh it runs—

"O bydd llon hinon dydd ha',—neu wybren
Yn obrudd y gaua',
Y cyfaill goreu, cofia,
A lleufer dyn, yw llyfr da,"

which might be reset in English after this manner, roughly to preserve the "Englyn":—

"O if the summer day be fair,—or the bleak
Wind of winter blind the air,—
Of all friends for a man, far or near,
A good book is the best, sans compare."

Poor, high-fortuned Ieuan! As you walk up the street to the market, when the last tourist has

gone from the town, you shall see him turn the corner, three rusty quartos under his arm.

Another figure to be conjured up here is the author of "Twm Shon Catti," who wrote also "The Land beneath the Sea"—Cantref-y-Gwaelod—and "The New Aberystwyth Guide" of 1824, published by Lewis Jones in the town. The charm of this "New Guide" lies in its power to conjure up the old days before the railway came. J. Llewelyn Prichard, the author, has had his account in the Swansea chapter,* but in his rôle of guide he reminds us of the Devil's Bridge and of the way there, and of "The Grand and Tremendous Fall of the Rheidol" (in Black Letter impressiveness) as they were in the days of the open road. The Devil still roars under the two bridges as of old, but he is in a cage now, and you pay sixpence to look at him. Instead of walking there, too, you can go by the new Devil's Bridge line, which is as adventurous as any in South Wales. The present itinerant had the pleasure of riding over it before it was opened and while it was still in the rough; and the train seemed to climb hills and impend over waterfalls and pull up in farmyards, with delightful indifference to all the laws of gravity and traction. A fine wild region is that it brings you to, with Havod where Thomas Johnes set up his mansion and his press and printed his Froissart and other great books, and Ystrad Flur or Strata Florida—where some say Dafydd ab Gwilym is buried—and Pont Erwyd, Llyn Iwan, Llyn Rheidol and Plynlymon—all within reach if you are a good walker. Much nearer home, you pass Nanteos, where lived Swinburne's friend, George E. J. Powell, co-author with Arnason of the "Icelandic

* Pp. 161–175.

Legends," 1864. One only wishes he had turned his fancy to Welsh things too, for he had a rare gift of narrative and more than a translator's share of originality.*

* See article, "A Tribute to Swinburne," in the *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1909.

CHAPTER XXXV

LLANBADARN—CANTREF-Y-GWAELOD—THE SECOND DELUGE—BORTH—THE END OF THE JOURNEY

In some of the older Cardiganshire records Aberystwyth, the town as well as the Castle, appears as Llanbadarn Fawr, in whose parish it stands. Leland speaks of it in one page of his Welsh Itinerary as "Abreostuthe." His entry reads as if he had tried to transcribe in part the actual words that some Cardigan farmer he had met had used in speaking of it. The town, he notes, "hath bene waullyd, and hathe great privilegis, and is bettar market than Cardigan."

There, at Llanbadarn, stands a noble church, heavy-wall'd, deep-arch'd, built to outlast time; a place where the shadow shot with light of the greatest poet of Wales ought to be surprised if anywhere; where the memory of Dafydd ab Gwilym certainly is held close beneath the sombre arches. There is one of his odes, or "cywyddau," in particular that starts his Llanbadarn memory. It is the harp-ode in which he begs the tide not to prevent his getting over the river Dovey ("na luddia ei hynt tros Ddyfi i ymweled a Morfudd") to see Morvyth—hasting to go—

"I dew lwynbedw i Lanbadarn"

(In the thick birch-covert to Llanbadarn).

In another he speaks of her pilgrimage across many abers and rivers to receive absolution at St. David's for having slain him by her cruelty:—

"Deep the waves of Dovey are,
And mountain high, to hinder her:
Rheidol too, for Morvyth's feet,
Peace! make strait the wat'ry street;
And Ystwyth, leave thy spumy rage
And grant with heaving breasts a stage
To her that steps on pilgrimage."

"A dwfn yw tonnau Dyfi
Dwfr rhyn yn ei herbyn hi;
Rheidol, gad, er d'anrhydedd
Heol i fun hael o fedd;
Ystwyth, ym mhwyth, gad im hon
Drais dew-ddyfr, dros dy ddwyfron."

The coast journey that Dafydd had then to make, on his way from Anglesey and round to Llanbadarn, and on to Glamorgan, was, because of the rivers he had to cross, a pretty devious one. He had plenty of time, as he waited for a ferry at Aberdovey, or for the tide to ebb on the Rheidol, to string some of those melodiously linked, fluid couplets which are among the wonders of the art of rhymed verse.

Before leaving Llanbadarn you can, if you have the art, call up a far older church than that you see there now, and with it the form of an older Genius of Place than our other David of the Odes—St. Padarn, or Paternus. Gerald just speaks of him in the Baldwin Itinerary; and helps us to use him as another link that connects the old tribal clerics with the Arthurian tales. Padarn went to Ireland, and brought back possibly some Irish ideas with him. His cousin Samson had Arthur's faculty of

Photo by] *[W. R. Hall, Aberystwyth.*

THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE RAILWAY.

making stones fly like thistledown, if the story told of the Celtic Crosses in the churchyard is true. Samson was threshing with them on Pen-y-Dinas, when the head flew off one; flew indeed so far that it dropt right into the churchyard here. Whereupon Samson, with a very explicit Arthurian oath, threw the shaft after it. The stones are there now: "they may be seen," which proves how dependable tradition is. Moreover, one of them at least bears the name of an Irish chief; and as Padarn had been to Ireland in quest of his father, the reality of the story is established. That fantasy came after is but natural; it does not destroy the matter of fact.

Gerald's account of the Breton knight who went to Llanbadarn, and of the cleric with the spear he saw there, is too striking to be left out of the reckoning. Even so, he ends with a naïve admission that he knows more than he thinks it politic to tell:—

"It happened that in the reign of King Stephen, who succeeded Henry I., a knight, born in Armorica, having travelled through many parts of the world to see different cities and the manners of the inhabitants, came by chance to Lhanpadarn. On a certain feast-day, whilst both the clergy and people were waiting for the arrival of the abbot to celebrate Mass, he perceived a body of young men, armed, according to the custom of their country, approaching towards the church; and on inquiring which of them was the abbot, they pointed out to him a man walking foremost, with a long spear in his hand.

"Gazing on him with amazement, he asked, 'If the abbot had not another habit, or a different staff, from that which he now carried before him?'

"On their answering 'No!' he replied, 'I have seen indeed and heard this day a wonderful novelty!' and from that hour he returned home, and finished his labours and researches.

"This wicked people boasts, that a certain bishop* of their church (for it formerly was a cathedral) was murdered by their predecessors; and on this account, chiefly, they ground their claims of right and possession. No public complaint having been made against their conduct, we have thought it more prudent to pass over, for the present, the enormities of this wicked race with dissimulation, than exasperate them by a further relation."

At Llanbadarn lies buried one of the most original men Wales has produced—Lewis Morris o Fon, poet, inimitable letter-writer, mining engineer, botanist, philologist, marine surveyor, and many things besides. The collection of the Letters of Lewis Morris and his brothers, issued in a subscribers' edition by Mr. J. H. Davies, is full of colour, Welsh mother-wit, and shrewd and caustic comment on the Wales of the eighteenth century.

Going northwards, there is still a long string of explorable places to be added to the Aberystwyth count. By taking train to Glandovey you are in reach of the Llyfnant Valley, and Cwm Einion (called by guide-books "the Artists' Valley," which has more character than that fond name seems to declare). We once took up quarters at Cwm Farm, and learnt by heart another valley which shall be nameless here—

". . . Lest inquisitive tourist
Hunt it, and make it a lion, and get it at last into guide-books."

From that centre we explored the Borth district,

* The name of this bishop is said to have been Idnerth—the same personage whose death is commemorated in an inscription at Llanddewi Brefi.

went to Bedd Taliesin, and counted the blue space about it, worth many a league's travel; but found nothing, high or low, more affecting than the unconquered bog of Cors Fochno and the sand-levels of Traeth Maelgwn.

The folk-lore and traditions of this district would need a Jacob Grimm for their account. With regard to Taliesin, you cannot do better than look up his story as added (in a corrupted version) to the Mabinogion proper. A note reminds us that the Cistvaen at Bedd Taliesin was opened in 1848 by the Cambrian Archæologues, but nothing was found in it save darker earth. As for Cors Fochno, it has a Toad of untold age, by whose side the Salmon of Llyn Llyw was a mere babe in antiquity. On Traeth Maelgwn, tradition says, the over-lordship of Wales used to be decided. A sign was required to decide the supreme regality of the lord-elect on Traeth Maelgwn, and the test was the old one of the wave-controller. Maelgwn succeeded in floating on a chair with waxen wings and keeping his place when the tide flowed, while the other claimants to the title of Superman gave way and fled. Those who have watched the force of the tide, even as squandered in that wide estuary of the Dovey when it flows up, a mile wide, fast and irresistible, will know what to think of Maelgwn's magic. There is a story, not over well authenticated, of a dispute between Taliesin and Maelgwn which ought to be true, since it shows the poet and king at war and the poet victorious. In this account Maelgwn takes Taliesin's land from him, and he curses the king. It is because of the curse that the "Vad Velen," or Yellow Plague, overtakes Maelgwn at last. He hides from it in the church in Rhos,

but spies through the keyhole and sees the Evil Thing in visible presence and in a form not unlike that of a speckled Toad, and so dies. In those days the curses of the bards were often mortal.

But Taliesin was dæmonic in all his properties. His mysterious advent on this coast is the epic result of a cataclysm of nature, which is described in the old story of the Drowning of the Bottom Hundred—or Cantref-y-Gwaelod—monarch of all tales of the all-conquering sea and the conquered land. Gwyddno Garanhir was king of the drowned region, and one feast-night Seithenen (called ever afterwards) the Drunkard, his sea-ward, was in his cups and did not watch the sea. The flood broke in and drowned the Cantref and sixteen great fortified cities, the finest in all Wales, with it.

Cardigan Bay occupies the spot where the fertile plains of the Cantref had been the habitation and support of a flourishing population. Such as escaped the inundation fled to Ardudwy, and the country of Arvon, and the mountains of Eryri (Snowdon), and other places not previously inhabited. "By none was this misfortune more severely felt than by Gwyddno Garanhir, to whom the reverse of circumstances it occasioned was so great that, from being an opulent monarch, he was all at once reduced to the necessity of maintaining himself and his only son, the unfortunate Elphin, by the produce of the fishing weir mentioned in the text.

"This disastrous event is commemorated in a proverb still repeated in the Principality:—

> "'The sigh of Gwyddno Garanhir
> When the wave rolled over his land.'

Photo by] [*W. R. Hall, Aberystwyth.*

OLD SALTS AT BORTH.

Photo by] [*W. R. Hall, Aberystwyth.*

CANTREV-Y-GWAELOD : A DROWNED FOREST.

"There is also preserved in the Myvyrian Archaiology (I. 165) a short poem upon the subject attributed to Gwyddno Garanhir, in which there are some exceedingly poetic and striking passages. The bereft monarch calls upon the author of his distress to view the calamitous effects of his intemperance, pronounces maledictions upon his head, and describes the outcry of the perishing inhabitants of that unhappy region."

"Stand forth Seithenin and behold the dwelling of heroes —the plain of Gwyddno the ocean covers! *

Accursed be the sea guard, who after his carousal let loose the destroying fountain of the raging deep.

Accursed be the watcher, who after his drunken revelry, loosed the fountain of the desolating sea.

A cry from the sea arises above the ramparts; † even to heaven does it ascend,—after the fierce excess comes the long cessation!

A cry from the sea ascends above the ramparts; even to heaven does the supplication come!—after the excess there ensues restraint!

A cry from the sea awakens me this night!—

A cry from the sea arises above the winds!

A cry from the sea impels me from my place of rest this night!

After excess comes the far-extending death."

As a consequence of this great loss, Gwyddno is

* Seithenyn the Drunkard's mischance in letting the sea overflow the Cantrev-y-Gwaelod is related in Triad xli.

† Traces of three ancient stone embankments are said to be still visible in the district where this inundation took place. They are called Sarn Cynvelyn, Sarn-y-Bwlch, and Sarn Padrig. "The latter is particularly conspicuous, being left dry at low water to the extent of about nine miles, and the sailors of the neighbouring ports describe its whole length to be twenty-one miles, beginning near Harlech, and running in a south-west direction" (*Cambro-Briton*, i. 362).

from a king reduced to a fisherman; and it is in his weir at Borth that the babe Taliesin is found by Elphin. But you must turn for the full story to the Mabinogion volume or to Peacock's imaginative burlesque, "The Misfortunes of Elphin."

Once, crossing with our bicycles by ferry from Aberdovey, G. and I found the tide far out, and the sands between the river and Borth hard and smooth for riding. There was a fair nor'-west wind blowing, and the sensation as we rode south before it was more like flying than anything we had known. Borth itself, we thought, had a decided effect of being a growth of the sand-dunes and the sea. We had tea in an old sea-captain's cottage with sand at its door and white stones in its garden, protected by wooden bulwarks from the too friendly sea; and white ducks with sandy bills came and quacked at the door. I wondered, on hearing of the last great December storm, how this half-amphibious abode of man stood the watery siege? Its force may be gathered from the account given of the same sea-fury at Aberystwyth.

At the river Dovey the Welsh South Coast-line ends. "Approaching the river Devi," says Gerald, "that divides North and South Wales, the Bishop of St. David's and Rhys son of Gruffydd, who with a courtesy peculiarly gracious in so great a prince had travelled with us all the way from Cardigan Castle, returned home." One can still see that parting on the long sands of Borth—another of the many episodes that have occurred there on their shifting beach. If Borth were ever in these pageant-making days to re-enact its history on those sands, the leave-taking of the young prince and the bishop on one side, and the comely self-conscious

Gerald and Archbishop Baldwin on the other, would make a notable piece of spectacle.

These superb old wayfarers have faded, we may think, too completely from our possible range of recollection to be held credibly actual to-day. But do ever the eidola of the people who have lived and fared, or fought and died on such sea-shores or in the fields, quite perish out of mind? They are dead to you if you have not the imagination to overstep time. They are alive at this moment if you choose so to quicken them. It is with some faith in the power of the reader to see this ancient tenantry of the sea-coast and its hamlets, farms and old houses, as in a glass, that he has been led this long dance from Gwent to the ferry over the Dovey. If he do not, or do not care to, see them, then the coast journey has failed of half its purpose, which is to bring many far-distant places and their folk into an erratic chronicle: another contribution to the incomplete testament of Wales—the Wales of the great itinerants, from Gerald to Dafydd, from John Leland to George Borrow, from Taylor the Water Poet to Twm o'r Nant, last of the Interlude-writers.

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